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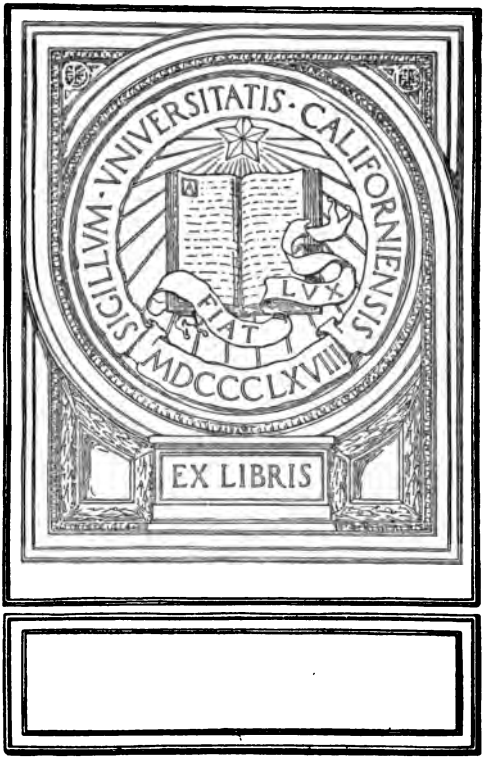
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THE
PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION

ON THE BASIS OF ITS HISTORY

BY

DR. OTTO PFLEIDERER
PROFESSOR IN THE UNIVERSITY OF BERLIN.

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN
OF THE SECOND AND GREATLY ENLARGED EDITION

BY

ALEXANDER STEWART, M.A.
AND
ALLAN MENZIES, B.D.

VOL. I.

WILLIAMS AND NORGATE,
14 HENRIETTA STREET, COVENT GARDEN, LONDON
AND 20 SOUTH FREDERICK STREET, EDINBURGH.
1886

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ON THE BASIS OF ITS HISTORY

BY

DR. OTTO PFLEIDERER.

UNIV. OF CALIFORNIA

I. HISTORY OF THE PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION FROM SPINOZA TO THE PRESENT DAY.

VOL. I.—SPINOZA TO SCHLEIERMACHER.

WILLIAMS AND NORGATE,
14 HENRIETTA STREET, COVENT GARDEN, LONDON
AND 20 SOUTH FREDERICK STREET, EDINBURGH.
1886.

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PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION.

THE first edition of this book was published at a time in many ways unfavourable to the reception of such a work. The book has yet in a comparatively short period made its way far beyond the limits of Germany, and though attacked in some quarters, has for the most part found great favour. The more have I felt it incumbent on me when the opportunity arose for a new edition to remove, as far as I was able, the defects of my work, to which I was by no means blind.

What was most required was a considerably extended treatment of the first part of the work, the history of the philosophy of religion. The true beginning of that philosophy had to be traced in the 17th century, before the time of Lessing; then my statement and criticism of the views of several thinkers (*e.g.* Kant) had to be made somewhat more precise and circumstantial; there were gaps of greater or less importance to be filled up, and it was necessary to speak of the most recent contributions to the

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study. These additions have increased the first part to such an extent that it now takes up a volume [vols. I. and II. of the translation]. This part of the work cannot even now claim to be complete in a literary sense: it does, however, treat the essential points which a history of the philosophy of religion is bound to notice at sufficient length to give even the reader who has not specially occupied himself with such philosophical studies, a connected view of the efforts of the human mind to sound the depths of the profoundest questions of life.

The second volume [III. and IV. of the translation] contains the philosophy of religion treated genetically and speculatively. Here a new section has been added, giving a concise sketch of the development of the religious consciousness in its beginnings in the Indo-Germans, the Semitic race, and in Christianity. This does not of course claim to be a complete history of religion. Such a history could not be given in so small a space, and perhaps the state of study in certain branches of the subject is not yet such as to admit of it. What is attempted is merely a compendious review of the principal forms in which the religious endowment of our race has manifested itself, as a basis and preparation for a philosophical view of the religious consciousness. The arrangement adopted has favoured simplicity in this latter discussion, and has enabled the results to be presented more clearly

and in closer connection with each other. I have also bestowed more care on the style of the work, and have sought more than in the former edition to exchange the language of the school for the common language of men, expressing my view of things as simply as I could, and showing as distinctly as I could how it differs in each case from the views of others. I trust that this will of itself remove many objections and misunderstandings from which the former edition had to suffer. I have not, however, felt myself obliged any more than formerly to defend myself specially against attacks of a personal nature, which have by no means been wanting, because I think little is ever gained for the subject in hand by such engagements, and that it is merely darkened and confused by the introduction of personal elements. This attitude I shall continue to maintain. Thankful as I am for any criticism that is material to the subject, I shall not waste time and strength in noticing and repelling personal attacks. Let each one faithfully do his best to help the common labour in those lofty and arduous tasks imposed on us by the age and its eternal ruler, and time itself will show how much of each man's work is gold and silver, how much is wood, hay, stubble!

In conclusion, I desire to state that I have derived great assistance in my preparation of this book from the philosophical and historical works of *Erdmann*, *Zeller*, and *Harms*.

On the earlier portion of it I desire the reader to compare *The History of the Christian Philosophy of Religion* (untranslated) of Bernhard Pünjer, of which only the first volume (1880) has appeared, going down to Kant. This work is on a more comprehensive plan than mine, and is often fuller.

OTTO PFLEIDERER.

CHARLOTTENBURG, NEAR BERLIN, *June* 1883.

[FOR some of the verses which will be found rendered into English in the chapter on Goethe the translators are indebted to MISS SWANWICK, who has kindly allowed them to make extracts from her version of "Faust."

The other translations of verse in that chapter and in others have been prepared for the present volume.—TR.]

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INTRODUCTION.

TAKING Philosophy of Religion in the wider sense of the term, according to which it denotes all reflection upon religious subjects, it may with truth be said that it is as ancient as Philosophy itself, indeed that it is the root of all other Philosophy, since, as a matter of fact, among all peoples the earliest speculations have been of a religious nature, and from these Philosophy in general took its rise. If, however, we understand Philosophy of Religion in the narrower, and, 302 strictly speaking, the only proper sense, according to which it is the systematic, scientific investigation and comprehension of the totality of phenomena which in the life of man compose religion, it must rather be regarded as the most recent of all the departments of Philosophy, as, in this sense, it is quite modern, scarcely more than two hundred years old. And this is intelligible enough. For, to the scientific comprehension of religion as a whole, two conditions are obviously indispensable. In the first place, Religion must be presented in experience as a fact by itself, clearly distinguished from the other phases of social, and especially of civil, life. Secondly, there must also be a real Philosophy,—one, that is, in which investigation is independent of external authorities, rests on its own basis, and is scientific, and in which knowledge is logically consistent. The former of these two conditions was wanting throughout antiquity; hence the Greek philosophers, who indeed frequently speculated regarding the divine nature and the gods, never made religion, as a whole, as a special department of the life both of the individual and of society, the subject of their systematic inquiry. With Christianity religion for the first time appeared as an independent fact, clearly distinguished

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alike from politics, art, and science, and thereupon accordingly a thoroughgoing philosophical comprehension of it became for the first time possible. But to realise this possibility, the second essential requirement, the independence of science, was, in the early and mediæval periods of Christianity, still lacking. The Fathers and the Schoolmen did indeed make an abundant use of the ideas of Greek philosophy; neither was there wanting to them a speculation of their own of a specifically Christian character; and their skill in the use of the formal dialectic was developed to marvellous perfection; but with all that, their thinking was never an independent scientific investigation, but was throughout, though in different degrees, dominated by presuppositions furnished in the faith of the Church, whether in the form of a still somewhat undefined general consciousness, or of a dogma fixed by ecclesiastical authority. As long, accordingly, as any distinction is made between Dogmatic Theology and the Philosophy of Religion (and that these ought to be more clearly distinguished than is usually the case is my firm persuasion, necessarily resulting, as I think, from the conception, origin, and aim of Philosophy on the one hand and Theology and Dogmatics upon the other, as to which I refer the reader to subsequent discussions)—(vol. ii. chap. ii.)—so long we cannot recognise any Philosophy of Religion in the strict sense either in Patristic or Scholastic times.

The first germs and impulses in this direction are to be discerned in two phenomena, which at the close of the mediæval and the opening of the modern period announce the awakening of a new spirit in Religion and Science, namely, *Theosophical Mysticism* and the anti-scholastic *Philosophy of the Renaissance*. Mysticism overleaps all those channels by which religion is at once interpreted and obscured in the dogma and the worship of the Church, in order to find its life directly in religion itself, to experience the revelation of God in the heart of the individual, and to possess salvation now and here, in the sense of most intimate union with God. As the kernel of religion does certainly consist in this, it cannot be without direct advantage for the philosophical comprehension of religion in general to sound these depths of the mystical consciousness as a guide to the inner-

most features of the religious life. At the same time Mysticism is not yet Philosophy of Religion; what distinguishes it from the latter is that it is deficient in respect of clear notions and systematically developed thought. In place of these it sets the intuitions of imagination, and the poetical metaphors of Theosophy, which are certainly capable of containing profound truth, but still in more or less figurative obscurity. To this extent therefore the mystical Theosophists have no place in the history of the Philosophy of Religion, the commencement of which cannot be reckoned earlier than Spinoza. Still, by way of introduction, we may appropriately set out with a glance at the more noted among his mystical predecessors.

At their head stands MEISTER ECKHART, a Thuringian by birth, who in the beginning of the fourteenth century put forth an influential activity as teacher and preacher in the Dominican Monastery at Cologne. His aim was to think of God in just such a living, essential, and inward relation to the world as corresponds to the mystical consciousness of union with God in love. According to Eckhart, God in his undefined transcendent being is not yet the true God; he becomes so first when he thinks himself and expresses himself, whence arises first the Trinitarian distinction within the Godhead, but also and along with this the revelation of God in the world. With the same word with which God speaks the Son, he speaks and brings into existence all things; with the same love with which God loves the only-begotten Son, he loves me and thee, and all creatures. Without the creature God would not be God; he cannot do without us any more than we can do without him. What the creatures truly are, they are in God, or that is God's own being in them; in so far as they are, on the other hand, out of God, a particular This or That, they are properly nothing; and this nothingness, this finality, is the ground of all the evils in the world, as again all the good of the creature rests upon the fact that God has bestowed upon it of his own being. It is in this that the goodness of God consists, in communicating himself to all; and this is so necessary to him that he himself could not be God, if he did not communicate himself. But

although there is in all creatures something of God, it is only in the human soul that God is godlike. The spirit of the soul, or the rational soul, is the divine spark in us, which alone is capable of receiving God, and then the true union of God and the soul takes place. And as God contains all things in himself, his counterpart, our soul, is also a microcosm, which includes all things in itself, and by means of which all things are brought back to God. Since now our true being is just God's being, thinking and willing in us, the whole of salvation depends on our giving ourselves completely over to God that he may work in us, on our "suffering God" in seclusion and quietness of mind, on our knowing nothing and desiring nothing save God and his goodness, on our renouncing all self-love and all love of the creature. Man must regard all that is made as of no account, he must be as though he had no knowledge of outward things. If God in thee is to be one with thee, thou must become as nought. He who seeks God, and at the same time seeks anything besides God, will not find God; but he who seeks God only, will with him receive all things. The goal of man, his true blessedness, and at the same time the end of the whole creation, is that we, giving up our own will and surrendering our whole self to God (while we suffer God), may become essentially and entirely one with God. Without any distinction we become the same being, substance, and nature that Christ is, that God himself is, only that we only through grace *become* what God by nature and eternally *is;* God's being becomes our life, God's reality our reality, neither more nor less. There is here a continual renewal of the same incarnation of God which took place in Christ; for, remarks Eckhart profoundly, the Father not merely begat the Son in eternity, but begets him without ceasing in the soul of man; between the soul and the only-begotten Son there is no distinction; for what the Son reveals to us is just this, that we are the same Son. The Holy Ghost also, as Eckhart in one passage expresses it, derives his essence and manifestation from me as well as from God (is therefore no other than the unity of the divine and human spirit). But although Eckhart frequently describes this mystical union with God as an absorption of the soul in God, as a total losing of one's

self, as an annihilation of the Ego, he still does not mean to denote by these expressions an indolent passivity, an unfruitful Quietism. On the contrary, the abolition of the undivine Ego is in his view at the same time the reception and invigoration of the true, that is, the divine life in us; the rest in God is at the same time "freedom of movement," to suffer God means God working through us. He says expressly: "God does not compel the will (through a mechanical compulsion taking away our self-activity); he establishes it in freedom, so that it desires to have nothing but what God will have, and what is itself freedom,—and that is not its unfreedom, it is its peculiar freedom." And in a sermon upon Mary and Martha he works out the thought, that while the inward contemplative life is in itself the best, just on that very account it is better, where there is need of bodily help, to perform the works of the outer life in pity for one's self or for one's neighbour than to sit down in an inner abstraction. He often points out, however, in a genuine evangelical spirit, that works are not in themselves good and do not make a man righteous, but only through the will from which they proceed, and that he only is good who desires nothing for himself, not even salvation and the kingdom of heaven, but only God and that which is of God. "In the righteous man there should be nothing at work but God only; the righteous have no will whatever but God's; but those who engage in works and busy themselves for the sake of something, whether it be salvation, the kingdom of heaven, or such-like, are all hirelings and not righteous." Accordingly they do not even attain salvation, but remain in condemnation, because they hold fast to the vanity of the creature, and to their own will, which constitutes hell. He, on the other hand, who renounces his own wishes and thoughts and gives his soul entirely to God, has no need to be anxious even about righteousness, but may let go the reins and suffer God to work in him, for in his love to God he is already sure of his salvation, of which neither any outward evil nor even sin can any more deprive him. It is the spirit of the Reformation, the spirit of Luther, which we seem to see trying its wings in these thoughts of his earlier fellow-countryman.

Eckhart's mysticism found a wide acceptance both on the upper and on the lower Rhine. In South Germany its chief representatives were *John Tauler* and *Henry Suso;* on the lower Rhine, *John Ruysbroek, Gerhard Groot,* and *Thomas* (Hamerken) *à Kempis.* In all these Eckhart's speculative power was altogether subordinated to the practical purpose of edification; their strength lies in delicate religious fervour and feeling, in acute study of the world and of self; but the exclusive stress which they laid upon renunciation of the world, patience, tranquillity, simplicity, passiveness, and seclusion, gives their pious mysticism the one-sided character of monkish asceticism and unpractical quietism, which prevented it both from deepening religious knowledge and from exerting an effective reforming influence upon the life of the Church. Comparatively free from this one-sidedness, and much superior in speculative ability to those named, was the unknown author of the GERMAN THEOLOGY (*Theologia Germanica*), who lived in the fourteenth or fifteenth century probably in South Germany (Frankfort?), and received his impress from the school of Eckhart. He united the master's depth of thought with the edifying tendency of the disciples, and consequently became, as standing in closer contact than the former with the life of the Church, an extremely important intermediary between the speculation of the Mystics and the Protestant Theology which sprang up anew out of the practical faith of the people.

The *German Theology* also proceeds from a speculative conception of God. It distinguishes, just as Eckhart did, between the indeterminate Deity, which is inaccessible to knowledge and desire, and the manifested God, who alone is the real living God, the reason, will, and origin of all the intelligent life of the world. But this real and self-revealing God cannot be thought apart from the creature, for "it belongs to will, that it should will, else what were it? It would be useless if it had not operation, and this cannot be without the creature. Therefore the creature must be, and God will have it, that this will may have in it its proper work, which otherwise is, and must be, in God without having anything to do." Now all creatures are in themselves good, for they point and conduct to God and

eternity, so that all things constitute a suburb of eternity, and may therefore be called, and be in truth, a Paradise. And everything contained in this Paradise is allowed, except *one* tree and its fruit—namely, one's own will. If there were no will of one's own, there would be no hell and no devil. There is nothing apart from and contrary to God, except only the will which wills otherwise than the eternal Will. This contrariness of will is termed disobedience, egotism, selfishness, self-will, sin, the old Adam, Nature, devil, self-assumption, apostasy, and departure from God, and all these are one and the same. The healing of this fall and apostasy of man, in which our damnation lies, can only be through God's work in man. "While God makes himself man in us, he makes us divine in him." And this work of salvation must take place in the inner nature of each person, for nothing which is outside of the soul can make man good and blessed. Were God to accept all men and make himself man in them, but were this not to take place in me, my fall and apostasy could never be remedied. Therefore, although it is good that information be sought and obtained as to what pious and holy men have done and suffered, and how they have lived, also what God has effected and willed in and through them, yet it would be a hundredfold better that a man experienced and learned for himself what *his own* life is, and how it is constituted, what God is in *him*, and has desired to bring about by means of *him*. It is better to be thoroughly acquainted with our own hearts, and to learn to know ourselves, than to look to the example of others. In fine, salvation does not depend upon any creature or creaturely work, but only upon God and his work; but not so far as even this lies and is accomplished externally to me, for thus it brings no blessing to me, but as far as it lies and is accomplished in me, and is recognised and loved, tasted and enjoyed. Therefore we should wait upon God alone, and abandon all creatures, ourselves first of all. God's work in man is, however, no compulsion; but he "draws him," while he reveals to the soul something of the perfect good, which he himself is, and thereby rouses it to long after that good, to approach it, and to unite itself with it. The hindrance to this union is self-love, and love to

the fashion of this world, but also the self-deception of reason, which regards itself as the true and everlasting light. But when man lets go that which he looks on as his own, when he departs out of his selfishness, then God enters with that which belongs to him; then alone is Christ verily present, and man is "made divine," for he is enlightened by the divine light, and set on fire with divine love. Knowledge and understanding without love are worthless; though a man understand much about God and what belongs to God, if he has not love he is not made like to God; but if real love be in him, he will cleave to God and hate whatever is against God. He has then no longer power over himself, but God's will and spirit work powerfully in him, teach him and impel him to all good, so that for such a God-assimilated man there is no longer need for the commands of the law, nor of meritorious works, whether his own or another's, for all that it might be possible to attain by the help of the creatures *is* already *his*, and especially the forgiveness of sins. "As long as man is in disobedience sin is neither repented of, expiated, nor corrected, and do what he will, all is of no avail, for disobedience is sin itself; but if the man returns to obedience, all is at once expiated and corrected and forgiven, but otherwise not, which is to be carefully observed." Truly and profoundly as the evangelical root-thought of the inner freedom and blessedness of the child of God who is filled with the divine Spirit is here grasped, this mysticism is still lacking in respect of the full trust to be placed in the divine Spirit, trust in its being able to manifest itself in the midst of the world-life as the positive world-vanquishing and world-renewing power; it remains still entangled in that mediæval dualism, to which the divine begins only where the worldly leaves off. "The soul," says the German theologian, "has two eyes; the right is the possibility of peering into eternity; the left, of discerning time and the creature. But these two eyes of the soul cannot exercise their functions together; when the soul with the right eye would gaze into eternity, the left eye must abstain from all active exercise, and regard itself as though it were dead; and when the left eye would exercise its function with regard to that which is without, the right eye is

necessarily obstructed in its power of vision." It is only when man has become quite impoverished, when he is as nothing in his own eyes, and all created things are at the same time as nothing to him, that there springs up in him an inward life, and thereupon the man becomes God himself, so that nothing *is* any more save God, or what is of God; this is the Eternal One and only Perfect, and thus should it be in reality. Thus, in the abstract extravagance of this mystical love of God, the world, and with it the scene both of the moral activity of man and the historical revelation of God, threatens to disappear in God, as that which has neither existence nor value, in order to leave only room for the quiescent enjoyment of God by the pious subject withdrawing itself into its cold and solitary inward life. That is the boundary line which still separates this mystical religiousness and theosophy from the faith of the Reformation, grounded as the latter was upon the historical revelation, or the "Word," and charged with positive moral force. They have, however, in common that immediate inner assurance of salvation which is possessed by the heart which knows itself one with God in self-devoted love, which assurance constitutes the specific principle of Protestantism, both material and formal.

This kinship of spirit was clearly recognised by LUTHER, who in the year 1518 edited the *German Theology*, with a preface, in which he bore the following admirable testimony:—"This noble little book, in proportion as it is poor and unadorned in language and human wisdom, is the richer and more precious in art and divine wisdom, nor have I ever met with a book from which, after the Bible and St. Augustine, I have learned and will learn more as to what God, Christ, man, and all things are;" it proved also that the Theology of Wittenberg was not a novelty, as its critics persist in asserting. While Luther adopted into his own system the central thought of this mysticism, purified from its mediæval dross, and made it the principle of the Reformation Theology of justification by faith in the free grace of God only, he at the same time laid the foundation of a new, genuinely Protestant Theology, which is as far removed from the Aristotelianism of the schoolmen, as from the natural reason of

the pagan Renaissance and of the Pelagian Humanism. However hostile Luther might be to *this* Philosophy, and however contemptuously he might express himself concerning *this* "Lady Reason" (*Frau Vernunft*), it remains certain that he was the most philosophical among the Reformers, and that in the depths of his mystical doctrine of faith and his view as to knowing Christ (*Christusgnosis*) were hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge which were later on to unfold themselves in the science of Protestantism. In the mystical element, which Luther's religious genius laid as his most precious gift in the cradle of Protestant Theology, lies the indestructible bond which has ever since united, and will for ever preserve in union, Protestant Theology and the more profound speculative Philosophy.

But while this mystical element of the Theology of Luther sank in the dogmatic teaching of the Church to a degree at which it was scarcely appreciable, in consequence of the prominence given to the historical faith and the means of grace, in which the Protestant principle found at once its embodiment and its concealment, there were individuals who flung themselves into the cause of mysticism all the more enthusiastically, and as was to be expected also one-sidedly, in proportion as they felt their longing for a more profound and more inward religion unsatisfied and repelled by the dogmatic externality of the reformed faith. The most remarkable among these men are Caspar Schwenkfeld, Sebastian Frank, and Valentine Weigel, all three belonging to the century of the Reformation, in which they took up a position relatively to the Protestant Church and doctrine analogous to that occupied by the "Friends of God" and Mystics of the school of Eckhart to the Catholic Church in the two last centuries of the Middle Ages. There were in especial two chief points with which the opposition of these Protestant Mystics concerned itself. The more the official Protestantism—in this distinctly falling away from Luther's own mode of thought—pushed its identification of the "Word of God" and the letter of Scripture to the extent of an unspiritual and slavish idolatry of the latter, so much the more emphasis was laid by the Mystics upon the inner word, the living voice of God in

us, the witness of the Holy Spirit, as the only infallible instructor in the things of faith. "It is an abuse and superstition," says, for example, Frank, "to treat Scripture as every one is in the way of doing, to make it into an oracle, as though we were no longer to ask counsel of the Holy Spirit, no longer to resort to God about anything, but only to Scripture." And Weigel wrote:—"We must all be taught by the Holy Spirit, by the unction in us, otherwise all that is taught or written apart from this is in vain. Knowledge must well out from within, not be introduced merely by a book, for this avails nothing. We see plainly how those get on in theology who reject in regard to it the pure witness of the Holy Spirit in each person, or who are in favour of the learned only having the Holy Spirit, and the belief of others resting only upon good persuasion. It is the most mischievous deception when that which is most important is rejected; we put out a person's own eye, and then try to persuade him that he ought to see with some one else's eye." As all things proceed from the invisible to the visible, from the spiritual to the bodily, so the letter proceeds from the spirit that is within, and the spirit is thus the true source of all knowledge. But the revelation of the Spirit in true knowledge does not unfold itself to all. It is hindered both by the external tumult of worldly activities and by the inner obstacle of unprofitable thoughts, fancies, and dreams. But he who can hold in check all the outward senses as well as the imagination, who can withdraw himself into the inner region of the soul, who can wait upon God in calm abandonment within himself, and can attain to a forgetfulness of himself and all things else, is enlightened by God, is taught of God. In calm tranquillity God himself brings about the knowledge of his Son, who transcends all reach of reason, and thereupon a man becomes a partaker in the new birth, and is confirmed in it provided he often uses the same means. "In such a peaceful Sabbath-rest is the Christ-child seen in the cradle—that is, in the heart; after which he is found in the swaddling clothes also —that is, in the Holy Scriptures, which are read or heard with greater joy as witnessing to these wonderful works of God; and lastly, Christ is also recognised in the human nature which he

has assumed; and these three points may often be taken for one." This brings us at once to the other chief point, in which these Mystics differed from the teaching of the Church; that is the question as to the ground of salvation, whether it is without us or within us, whether it consists in the merit of the historical Christ, or in the life of Christ experienced in the soul? The latter is the great principle of the Mystics, which they repeat in every possible variety of expression and application. "It is a noteworthy error of false Christians," says Weigel, "that they leave another to obey the law, to suffer, to die, and they desire, without repentance, to avail themselves of imputed righteousness. Nay, truly, thou canst have no help from without, the life of Christ *in thee* must afford it,—Christ who dwells in us, not who abides without us. It is true faith, which is the life of Christ in us, which, without contradiction, involves in it the being baptized with him, suffering, dying, rising with him. This can only be effected by essential union with him; we must have him spiritually and bodily in us. Christ's death and merits are reckoned to no one, unless he have Christ's death in himself, unless he rise with him to a new life; and that is faith, namely, Christ's life ruling in us, his spirit abiding in us." In like manner Frank says:—Adam and Christ are in every man inasmuch as he is at once flesh and spirit. Christ after the flesh (the historical Saviour) is given us of God as sacrament and example, as a token of grace, that we may apprehend God in him. On this account Christ is called the revealed will of God, because in him everything has been completed and revealed, which, indeed, before existed in secret, only hidden, unknown, uncalled forth in the hearts of the patient ones, on account of whom the world knew it not, and first became aware of it through Christ's calling it forth. But the history, passion, and original condition of Christ must be completed in all his members; the Word must in us also become flesh, suffer, die, and rise again. Whenever then Christ, who already suffered in Abel, has been born in you and me and all his members, drives out the Adam from us, lives, teaches, suffers, dies, rises, leads us to heaven, and presents and subjects us all to the Father, his own

office, course, suffering, and death is then at length completely fulfilled. Christ as the head has done all this before us in the flesh of Adam which he assumed, has opened up the way and let us see that this is the way to life; his passion, however, profits no one in any respect until it enters into him, until we, through the Spirit, recognise what God has designed in and through him, and how he humbled himself to the flesh, that he might impart divinity to us. It is evident at once that the germ of the Speculative Philosophy of Religion is already contained, and contained with great exactness, in this mystical doctrine of salvation; and as this in turn has been shown to be nothing else than the consequence of the more profound evangelical doctrine of faith, as it is set forth in the authoritative writings of the Reformers, this Protestant mysticism forms the historical connecting link between the idea of Protestantism, as represented in its purity by the Reformers, and the speculative philosophy of religion of modern times. That it was nevertheless repudiated as heretical by the statutory Protestantism of the Church is quite intelligible, as in view of the practical ends sought to be compassed by the dogma of the Church, such a mystic speculative doctrine of salvation is far too spiritual and ideal for the community of worshippers as such to be able to reconcile themselves to it. To reconcile these deeper thoughts with the cruder dogma, and to cast them into a form adapted to the purposes of worship, is the task of dogmatic theology, which, however, is not to be identified without qualification either with mysticism or with the Philosophy of Religion.

Protestant mysticism culminated in the theosophy of JACOB BÖHME, in whom the direct link with modern philosophy is found, since the latter has confessedly received from Böhme so many impulses and ideas of great value. The theosophical system of Böhme, the shoemaker of Görlitz (1575-1624), is a phenomenon of extreme interest, were it for nothing else than that it is the original product of a self-taught philosopher, who, besides the Bible, was acquainted only with certain older Protestant mystics, and the physicist, Theophrastus Paracelsus. This combination of the practical

religious interests of mysticism, with the eager pursuit of knowledge which animated the physical science of the day, is the root of Böhme's speculation, through which he has earned the honourable title of the *Philosophus Teutonicus*, the typical originator of German philosophy, in which the same two intellectual tendencies continue to operate in union and in reciprocal influence. I cannot, in this place, enter upon the physical side of Böhme's speculation, but confine myself to the fundamental principle of religious philosophy contained therein,[1] in doing which I adhere as far as possible to Böhme's own words, whose probable meaning the reader may make out for himself.

Concerning God in himself it is impossible to say that he is this or that, evil or good, or that he has any distinctions in himself, since he is in himself without nature, without passion, without object. He has no tendency to anything, for there is nothing before him to which he could tend, neither evil nor good; he is in himself the Abyss, an eternal nothing, a calm without being, the nothing and the all, a single will in which the world and the whole creation lies; he is neither light nor darkness, neither love nor anger, but the eternal One, in whom everything is from eternity also, without beginning, alike in weight, size, and number. This abysmal, incomprehensible, unoriginated, single will, which is neither evil nor good, seizes and discovers itself in itself, and gives birth within itself to the eternal good as a comprehensible will which is the Son of the abysmal will. The abysmal will is therefore called the eternal Father, and the Will thus grasped and brought forth by the Abyss is called his begotten or only-begotten Son, for he is the Ens, reality (the becoming) of the Abyss, that in which the Abyss grasps itself so as to find a foundation. And that which goes out from the abysmal

[1] The writings of Böhme (following the complete edition of Schiebler) here specially considered are:—*Aurora*, *De Mysterio Magno*, *Of Divine Contemplation*, *De Incarnatione Verbi*, or *The Incarnation of Jesus Christ*, *Of the Election of Grace* (which Böhme himself pronounced "very sharp in understanding, and one of the clearest of my writings"), and finally, the last and unfinished work, *Theosophical Questions of Divine Revelation*. Writers upon J. Böhme are:—Hamberger, St. Martin, Baader, Martensen, also Carrière in his work upon the philosophical view of the world in the times of the Reformation.

Will through the apprehended Son or Ens is called Spirit, for he conducts the Ens thus apprehended out of itself into an exercise or life of the Will, as a life of the Father and of the Son; and that which has thus gone forth from them is Joy, as the discovery of the eternal nothing, since therein Father, Son, and Spirit evermore perceive and find themselves, and this is called the Wisdom, or Contemplation, or Imagination of God. This threefold being in its birth, in its self-contemplation, has been from eternity, and possesses in itself no other ground or abode than just itself; it has in itself also neither thickness nor thinness, neither height nor depth, nor space, nor time, but is through all and in all, and still is withal an incomprehensible nothing. For the one God wills in himself nothing more than just to find and apprehend himself, and to pass out of himself, and bring himself back in a contemplation; therefore he leads himself out into the threefoldness as into a mode of making himself apprehensible, which possibility of being apprehended is called the centre, the heart and soul of the eternal will, for it is the scene of its self-discovery. In him all faculties and senses have their origin, but still without being parted or distinguished; for all senses as qualities in God are in perfect agreement, and exist there only as an adorable moving to and fro of the Holy Spirit in the one perfect wisdom. He is a power operative within itself, essentially spiritual, the supreme, purest humility and beneficence, namely a feeling, an enjoyment of love and goodness, not yet wrath and love, but the typical Love itself, which in pure love leads and expands itself into a Trinity.

So much is to be said of the one being of God, considered as dwelling in itself and apart from all objects thought or created. We must proceed to note the partition according to which there originate in it the manifold powers and the opposition of good and evil, and to what end such partition was inevitable. No existence can without *contrariness* become manifest to itself, for if it has nothing that stands in opposition to itself, it must continually go out of itself and not return into itself again; but if it does not return again into that from which it originally went forth, it can know nothing of its

original condition. One single existence can know nothing more than one particular, and if it is at the same time good in itself, it can know neither evil nor good, for it has nothing in itself to make this perceptible. Thus, therefore, we are able to philosophise concerning the will of God and to say: If the unmanifested God, who is a single Being and Will, had not by means of his will gone forth from himself, from the eternal wisdom, in "temperament" (in a state of agreement), so as to occasion a *diremption* in the will, and had not worked round this diremption into a *conceivableness* in the form of a natural and creaturely life, so that this division should not in the region of life consist in *strife*, how could the unmanifested will of God, which in itself is a simple unity, be manifest? How should there be in a single will a knowledge of itself? If then anything remained one and alone, will could have in it no exercise; and therefore the abysmal will in the beginning divided itself and carried itself into being, that it might have a sphere in which to work. The soul of man is a symbol of this divine life; so long as it does not flow out of itself it has no sense-perception, no knowledge of itself or any other thing, and can accomplish or effect nothing; but when at the outflow of sense it meets a counteraction (object) in which it perceives itself, the soul in its inner being becomes capable of will and desire, and manifests and takes knowledge of itself in its working through the senses. Were all the centres of sense reduced to one, and were these in all but a single will which continually did only *one* thing, how in that case could the marvels and powers of divine wisdom become known by the soul, which is an image of divine revelation, and be expressed and represented? The reader must know that in *Yes* and *No* all things consist, whether they be divine, diabolical, earthly, or however they may be named. The One, as the Yes, is pure power and life, and is the truth of God, or God himself. He, however, would be in himself unknowable, and would have no joy or exaltation, or perceptibility in that condition without the No. The No is a countercheck to the Yes or the truth, in order that the truth may be manifested and be a something, in which there may be an opposition, in which the eternal love may come to be operative,

endowed with sensibility and inclination, and something to be loved. And yet it cannot be said that the Yes is severed from the No, and that they are two things side by side; they are only *one* thing, but they separate themselves into two sources, and form two centres, so that each has a power of activity and will in itself. In like manner day with regard to night, and night with regard to day, are two centres, and yet not separated, or separated only, as it were, in will and wish, for they have in them the hot and the cold, of which neither can manifest itself and be operative without the other. Just so are we to understand concerning the eternal unity of the divine power: if the eternal will did not flow out of itself and render itself capable of being adopted, there would be no form or distinction, but all forces would be but *one* force; so there could be no understanding of it, for intelligibility is founded in the distinctiveness of the manifold, so that one attribute sees, proves, and approves the other. Joy also is similarly constituted; for if desirableness is to arise, the appropriate longing must become aware of itself, and out of the appropriate will the No arises, for the will assumes a special form so as to enjoy itself, it desires to be something, and no longer contents itself with unity. For that which is *one* has nothing to desire, it doubles itself therefore that it may be *two;* so it cannot be aware of itself in unity, but is aware of itself when it has become twofold. Have therefore a correct understanding of the foundation! The separated will proceeds from the identity of the eternal desire, and has nothing on which to fix desire but itself. But because it is a something as opposed to the unity, which is as a nothing and yet everything, it has a desire for the unity in order to realise the joy of love so that this may be perceptible in it, and desires that itself may attain to motion, knowledge, and understanding, so that there may be a diremption within the unity, that forces may arise, out of the distinctions of which nature may spring.

Nature, the genesis of which has been thus described, is, however, not yet outward material nature, but the Eternal Nature in the bosom of divinity, the *Mysterium Magnum*, which in God himself becomes a kingdom of heavenly joy, a spiritual world of powers or

forms or typical spirits or attributes differing from each other (the ideas of Plato, the Logoi of the Porch, the Angels of Philo, the Æons of the Gnostics, the infinite modes of Spinoza, the potencies of Schelling, and so on). Böhme always reckons seven of these, of which the first three constitute the Fire-centre or wrathful will, the last three the Light-centre or loving will, of the divine Trinity, which accordingly first comes to distinctive operation or revelation in this twofoldness of the centres or principles of the divine nature. This relation, however, of the Eternal Nature to the threefold nature of God, and to the divine wisdom or imagination which may be reckoned as a fourth element, belongs to the obscurities of the system, which we will not undertake to explain here. The chief point is in any case this, that the divine Being, which in its threefold character is still one, differentiates itself within the Eternal Nature into the polar opposition of the two principles Fire and Light, Anger and Love, of which each operates within itself, distinguished as day and night are, and yet both resting on a single foundation, and each the cause of the other, so that the other is manifested and known through each, just as Light is by means of Fire.

Along with these two principles of the Eternal Nature, which Böhme also identifies with heaven and hell, the material world is ranked as a third principle. This visible world is nothing else than an effluence of the spiritual world, having its source in the seven forces; it is the counterpart of the spiritual world, and rests upon the latter as its most intimate foundation. As in the one Will the forces have arrived at mutual distinctiveness, and in respect of each force an opposite has sprung up as a cause of desire; this same desire in the opposition of the forces in its turn develops from itself a (new) opposite, in which the desire of such effluence is acute, strong, and overpowering, so that it coagulates and issues in material things. And just as the effluence of the inner forces had taken place from light and darkness, from sharpness and gentleness, from the mode of fire or of light, so is it with the production of material things: the further the outflow of a force has extended, the more outward and coarser does the matter become, for it has advanced by one opposition

out of another, until it becomes coarse earth. Thus, according to Böhme, God made the world, neither out of a foreign substance nor out of nothing, but rather out of himself, out of his own being; he has accordingly no hesitation in regarding the world as the visible appearance, as the body of the Deity. "When thou lookest upon the firmament and the stars and the earth thou seest thy God, and in that same God thou also livest and hast thy being. Many indeed may say—What kind of God is that whose body, being, and power lies in fire, air, water, and earth? Behold, thou man void of understanding, I will show thee the true nature of the Deity: If this whole sphere of existence be not God, thou art not God's image; if there be anywhere a God foreign to it, thou hast no part in him; if thou art of another material than God himself, how shalt thou be his child?" The things of the world are all produced from the being of God, because the Trinity delighted to have children like unto itself. Out of his eternal nature or his wrath, and out of his love, whereby the wrath is held in check, God created all things, on which account they all participate to some extent in these two poles of the divine nature. The forms (ideas, essences) of things were from eternity perceived in the divine wisdom; from them the world was created, when the Will apprehended itself in the Word, and every force took form according to its peculiar quality. For the Will longs for being, *i.e.* for embodiment; the separation of things from each other is due to the Will in that longing for existence in virtue of which it passes into being. By these profound thoughts Böhme's Theosophy proves itself the direct precursor of the metaphysics of Leibniz, Schelling, Baader, Schopenhauer, etc.

Evil also, according to Böhme, has its foundation in God, in the same process of distinction within the bosom of divinity by which the one will passes into the multiplicity of forces, in which also the origin of the finite as a whole lies, and which is the necessary presupposition of the manifestation and activity of God himself. It is one of the most significant among the many richly suggestive and bold word-coinings of Böhme, that with him "Qual," that is, Quality, attribute, determination, is one with "Quaal," that is, pain, evil, self-

will, wickedness. It is true that God as God, as the eternal good and principle of the world of light, is not wrath, but love only; but the love would not be manifested and would not be known as love without the wrath, and hence love submits to the fire of wrath that it may be itself a fire of love. If the holiness and love of God are to be manifested, there must be that to which the love and grace are a necessity, and this must therefore not be on a level with them. This is found in the will of nature, which rests upon contrariness: to this love is necessary that its sorrow may be turned into joy. That which is evil or rebellious must be the cause of the manifestation of the good, for it occasions the will to press back to its original condition, and so towards God. In this way evil has a special relation to construction and movement, as good has to love, and roughness or rebellion to joy. For a thing that is only good and has no suffering (*Quaal*) desires nothing, for it knows nothing better in itself or for itself after which it can long. Thus, therefore, we can philosophise concerning the one good will of God, and say, that he can long for nothing in himself, for he has nothing in or for himself which can give him anything; he develops himself therefore into a condition of partition, into *centra*, in order that an opposition may arise in that which has proceeded from him, that the good may be capable of being perceived, of desiring and of acting through the evil. Hence arise struggle and fear, that the whole soul may be stimulated to break through the dominion of the senses and their self-will, and emerging from the pain of rebellion and contention may be willing to return to the eternal rest to be found in the one will of God, out of which it arose. The self-will of the natural *centra* has thus no course open to it but to go out of its self-hood, and to cast in its lot again entirely with the primal will. For every evil will is a devil, seeing that it is a will self-directed to selfish ends, an apostate from the entire system of being, a vain imagination.

The commencement of this declension of self-will from the one divine will was made in the heavenly world by Lucifer, originally a good angel, but who, seduced by the proud ambition of being his own God and of rivalling God in creating, forsook the ordinance of

God, in consequence of which the divine light was extinguished in him, and darkness and the cold bitterness of rage was manifested in him, so that he became an enemy of God and of the good angels; then with the separation of the two central fires, the fire of wrath (of the self-hood) and the fire of love (of the unity), the former seized the false will and became its hell. That is the fall of Lucifer, that he brought the eternal will out of its harmony (*Temperatur*) into division, into the dissimilarity of imagination, which imagination took him at once and cast him into an inextinguishable realm of fire, alternately cold and hot, into the contrariness of forms. The same thing was repeated in the fall of Adam; originally created in a sexless condition as a perfect image of God, a microcosm as it were and essence of the three principles of the invisible and visible world, he, instead of directing his imagination to the heart of God, became rather enamoured of the creature, placed a vain fancy in the place of God, whereupon the Holy Ghost or the heavenly virgin, Wisdom (*Sophia*), deserted him, he became weak and helpless, the image of God was destroyed in him, and the animal qualities of the creature obtained dominion over him, which sad corruption found immediate expression in the division into two sexes of his nature which was originally hermaphrodite.

Fallen humanity could only be helped by the pure will of God again entering into the soul and directing its will once more towards the heart and light of God. Just as the word of the devil had obtained access to the soul, the word of God's love came and found an entrance into the faded image of God, and in this voice thus sounding within it the poor soul again laid hold of the divine breath and life, and this voice continued to be implanted from man to man as a continuous covenant of grace. Immediately the promise of him who would bruise the serpent's head came as a ray of love from the heart of God; and in this ray the whole race was to live. From this, as a beginning, the Word or the name of Jesus (the image, the spirit, the love of God) became incorporate in the seed of the woman as the germ of redemption to come, and in this implanted word salvation lay even for the pre-Christian humanity of

heathendom. But it was needful that God should himself become man with spirit, soul, and flesh, so that his divinity might through the medium of humanity be imparted to us, and that we might be able to receive it. In the death of Christ the bane of wrath which lay upon mankind through Adam, and which Christ drew upon himself, was consecrated and changed into love, and the flesh of Adam was imbued with the life-giving influences (*Tinktur*) of heaven, and so made capable of resurrection.

True knowledge is the revelation of God through the eternal wisdom. "Therefore let us destroy the thoughts produced in us by adherence to the letter, till not one remains, and let us not desire to know anything further of God than just that which God chooses to know in us and through us." In this way correct faith is not a mere thought or an assent to the historical statement that Christ died for our sins, but an acceptance and appropriation (*Essen*) of the being of God; it is *one* spirit with God, it operates in God and with God, it is free and bound by no creed, but only by true love through which it draws the power and strength of its life, and does not rest upon human imaginations. It has only the one inclination towards the love and mercy of God, so that it submits its own will to God's will, and lives in God, and God's spirit is in it to will and to do. It is as though it were not, and yet is everything in God. It is mighty, and yet is the lowliest humility. It is free from all wickedness, and has no law, for the violence of nature does not bring reproach upon it. It goes forth in accordance with the spirit of its life, and keeps itself under control, so that it is free from pain (*Quaal*) as God is free from pain, and abides thus in eternal freedom in God. It is with the eternal freedom of God as a nothing beside it, and yet is in everything; it finds profit in everything that God and eternity can offer, in all that they are. It is held in check by no being, it is the play-fellow and friend of the divine virgin (Wisdom), and performs in freedom the marvels of God in love. The forgiveness of sins is nothing else than that one gives up the will of this world and of one's flesh, and of the devil, and enters into the will of God; then God's will receives us and we are freed from all sins; they

may be near us, but disturb us not, for the calm eternity is freedom. In the regenerate the heavenly body is already present, though for a time concealed, but to appear after the death of the earthly. In the end the whole material world will pass away, and in its place will appear a genuine Paradise, the visible manifestation of the glory of God, the host of spirits a harmony of divine life.

This system is like a mine, whose recesses conceal under hard rock rich veins of precious metal. But in order to bring to the light this noble metal there was needed thought of a more disciplined and scientific kind, and a philosophical speculation more independent of the dogma of the Church. Such a philosophy was provided by the Renaissance, which adopted as its foundation Plato, Aristotle, and especially the Neo-platonists, who harmonised the views of both, and also received a manifold impulse from natural science, and took up a position with reference to the teaching of the Church which was characterised for the most part by indifference, but frequently also by hostility. The most remarkable instance of this is GIORDANO BRUNO of Nola, who, from being a Dominican monk, became a wandering philosopher, and died at the stake in the year 1600 a victim of the Roman Inquisition and a martyr of Philosophy. Although but slender contribution was made by him or by the other philosophers of the Renaissance to the Philosophy of Religion strictly regarded, yet were it for nothing but his close relation to Spinoza and Leibniz, we may devote a glance to his theory of the world, which is rich in ideas admitting of further development.[1]

In direct opposition to his contemporary Böhme, whose theosophy stood in the closest connection with theology and philosophical speculation, Giordano Bruno started with a most pronounced separation and contradiction of theology and philosophy. According to him philosophy has to do with the knowable, with the explanation of the

[1] His chief writings are: *Della Causa, Principio ed Uno; Del Infinito Universo e Mondi; De Immenso et Innumerabilibus; De Monade, Numero et Figura; Degli eroici furori.* The first named is translated and annotated by A. Lasson (Berl. 1872), compare Raff. Mariano, *Giord. Bruno, la vita e l'uomo.* Roma, 1881. H. Brunnhöfer: *J. Bruno's Weltanschauung und Verhängniss* (Leipzig, 1882), a somewhat too eulogistic exposition.

world from the principles inherent in itself; theology, on the other hand, with purely transcendental truths of Revelation, which go so far beyond our reason, that it is a stupendous folly and reprehensible error to attempt to measure them by the reason; we must yield credence to them simply on the ground of authority, but in philosophical discussion we must treat them with entire disregard. How far Bruno was in earnest in this recognition of the current dogmas is a point on which doubt may justifiably be entertained when we consider how pointedly he expressed himself in allegorical satires concerning church and priesthood, ceremony and dogma, and how he in various connections found the justification and value of positive religion exclusively in their practical pædagogic character as providing a means of discipline and education for the common people, for the multitude who are capable neither of thought nor of self-control. At the same time we must not fail to observe that there lay in the philosophy of Bruno a suggestion for the separation of theological and philosophical truth, and for the recognition of Revelation as going beyond reason, namely, in his conception of God, formed after the Neo-platonist model, in the absolutely transcendental character of which the denial of a capacity of being known was necessarily involved.

In strict accordance with the Neo-platonists, he describes God as the simplest conceivable being, in whom all distinctions and determinations disappear, in whom Being, Ability, Action, Desire, Essence, Power, Activity, Will, and whatever else can be truly predicated of him, are all one and the same. This "highest and best of all principles, which remains excluded from our sphere of consideration," is so far from being identified with nature (as Bruno has often been misunderstood as saying) that he frequently describes nature in express terms as a *reflection* of the unknowable supreme principle, and that he, for the very purpose of strictly maintaining the transcendence of the supreme Deity, interposes between the Deity and the world the *Soul of the World* as an *intermediate* principle, which at the same time separates and unites the two, following in this respect also essentially in the footsteps of the Neo-platonists. In this way he distinguishes three kinds of Reason: the divine, which (ideally) *is*

everything, but puts forth no activity, maintaining itself in eternal unchangeable Rest; the reason of the World, which *creates* everything as the indwelling active power of the world, or World-soul (*natura naturans*); finally, the reason of individual things, which *becomes* everything (*natura naturata*). "For there must be this mediating principle between the extremes, which is the true operative cause of all things in nature, and is not merely the external, but also the internal cause of them; I call it an external cause in so far as in the act of producing it is not a part of that which is composed and of the objects; it is however internal cause in so far as it does not operate upon matter and outside of it, but forms and shapes matter from within, as an internal artist." Although this World-soul or immanent cause is not to be considered as properly a personal subject, yet reason is to be attributed to it. "For every operative principle which works according to laws of reason, passes into activity only in accordance with a purpose. But this is impossible without a conception of an object, and this again is nothing else than the form of the thing to be produced. On this account this reason, which has the power of calling forth into reality from the potentiality of matter all kinds of objects, must necessarily have them all beforehand within itself, as determinate formal conceptions . . ." "The purpose and final cause, which the operative cause sets before itself, is the perfection of the totality, and this consists in all forms having actual existence in the different parts of matter. Reason rejoices so much in this end that it is never weary of drawing forth all kinds of forms out of matter." So far now as this immanent Reason or Soul of the world is the supreme creative principle, it may certainly be placed on a level with God, whose effluence and reflection it peculiarly is, and this explains the passages where Bruno seems to identify God and Nature, while he generally distinguishes them as type and antitype, but at any rate ranges them directly together in his usual formula—"God *and* Nature."

A similar hesitation to that which marks the relation of the World-soul to God is to be observed in Bruno as marking the relation of the World-soul to matter. Generally he distinguishes them as

active and passive power, as formal and material principle. But still he will not have matter regarded as a mere empty possibility, "the *prope nihil* of Aristotle," for since it sends forth the external objects from itself, it must have them within itself, and is thus the fountain of actuality, the maternal bosom of the actual, animated through and through in all its parts; and therefore he will not reject without qualification the view of those who do not separate the activity from the essence of matter, and understand the latter, not as something absolutely destitute of form, but as that which is self-formative and so far divine; indeed, he himself says in one place:—God and Nature are one and the same matter, the same power, the same space, the same operative cause. At the same time he declares it better to distinguish matter and soul in the organism of Nature, and so to assume three principles: the universal reason, the animating soul of the universe, and the substratum of this, namely, matter. His hesitations obviously spring from the fact that he had to contend with the traditional conceptions of Scholasticism; but his fundamental thought is sufficiently clear, as it runs through all these variations. The world is a living organism, which is not made through any cause external to itself, but is formed and developed by means of an inner principle, a principle which is at once operative power and purposeful reason, at once real and ideal, and which consequently appears in nature as a twofold substance, a spiritual and a bodily, while these two nevertheless are finally traceable to *one* essence and *one* root, and as regards substance are ultimately *one* and the same.

Here lies the point of connection for Spinoza's one substance with its two attributes of thought and extension; while on the other hand Bruno's idea of an immanent Teleology, of the development of all things out of the most minute elements which participate in the active and passive principle, and so far are at once souls and bodies, points clearly forward to the metaphysics of Leibniz. In like manner Bruno's conception of God oscillates between the two sides respectively represented by Spinoza and Leibniz. With the former he terms God the infinite Being, in whom power, desire, thought

and activity, necessity and freedom are one and the same, the *one* substance of the universe, in which spiritual and corporeal existences have their roots, thus binding God and nature together almost to the identification of the two. But with Leibniz he again assigns to God a position above nature and outside of the life that animates the world, and terms him the Monad of monads, the Substance of substances, the Soul of souls, the supreme perfectly good Reason, the primal Spirit, who surveys the universe with a single glance, and is the power which in every composite existence orders and connects it in accordance with purpose; he is called Light and Love inasmuch as he places his delight in the continually increasing perfection of the world through the development in it of all possible forms.

We are further reminded of Leibniz by the way in which the Ethics of Bruno joins itself on to this æsthetic-teleological side of his metaphysics. According to Bruno everything in the world is good and fair so far as it is regarded as a part of the whole, the order of which is reflected in the smallest part. The evil of the world arises from our regarding the individual part in its isolation and relative imperfection, which is a consequence of its limitation. When this mode of looking at everything by itself and with reference to ourselves governs our practical application of it, there arises that which we call *evil*, and which is nothing else than the contradiction of the particular with the idea of the whole. This, it may be granted, is unavoidable in a world of progress, for if there were only good, or scarcely anything else than good, the development of the world would be either superfluous or approaching its conclusion. But now the reasonable purpose of the world consists in all possible forms attaining actuality in the infinity of space and time,—a process of universal advance towards perfection, which demands an unbounded eternity. Human destiny also consists in striving to realise the divine image by the endless perfecting of man's higher being, already akin to the divine, and by his resisting the endeavour of his faculties of sense to keep him at a lower level of existence. The means to this end for each individual, and indeed for the great

majority, is faith in the divine revelation through particular men who are filled with loftier spirits than others. For the small minority, however, of those who feel in themselves the divine power of the Spirit, the capacity of knowledge and the love of the good and fair, the way to the moral ideal consists, according to Bruno, in the elevation of the emotions by means of the æsthetic and intellectual culture of the mind. Precisely in the manner of Plato, Bruno places the starting-point of moral education in the delight in sensuous beauty, by beholding which the first glimmering perception and gradual recognition of the higher beauty of the spiritual, the true and the good, springs up; and thereupon the mind passes from the relatively fair, which is only beautiful through its participation in the whole, on to the absolutely fair, which is without limit, to the Deity himself, as the type and the source of its own being, in the perfect goodness of which the mind recognises its own highest good. But as the knowledge of good always gives rise to the desire of possessing it, the knowledge of God as the perfect good gives rise to the will to strive towards him, and this endeavour of the will in turn stirs up knowledge towards a more intense contemplation of him. While the emotions of the senses hinder the mind in the activity peculiarly suited to its being, and alone resulting in true satisfaction, and so make it unhappy, it is by the "heroic emotions" of an endeavour directed towards the true, the beautiful, and the good, that the spirit is raised to blissful freedom from sensuous impulses and from the chances of the sensible world. By the stages of perception, representation, understanding, and reason, the heroic spirit is raised to the intellectual contemplation of God, and therewith the soul, as Bruno expresses it, changes itself entirely into God, and becomes at home in the intelligible world; *divine Love*, which is the Deity himself, becomes now the dominant emotion in the soul, and thus the latter overcomes the iron law of necessity, which only bends before love, and extends the endeavour after its own self-perfecting to the blessed labour for the general perfecting of all, in which lies the fulfilment of the divine purpose in the world. Thus does this system of Ethics, which proceeds from the Platonic worship of the

beautiful, issue in deeply religious and practically fruitful thoughts, the notes of which we hear again partly in Spinoza, partly in Leibniz, but most clearly in Shaftesbury and our own German classical writers.

We may with good ground recognise in the brilliant native of Nola the originator of modern philosophy—with much greater reason than in the far less original Descartes. But the very cause which contributed to the independence of Bruno's philosophical genius in general was a hindrance to him in the philosophical consideration of religion as a historical fact; to the Italian and escaped Dominican monk it was too much an object of the deepest repugnance to allow him to attain with regard to it a position of calm objectivity. Quite the contrary was the case with his contemporary, who more than rivalled him in depth of thought, the Lutheran *Philosophus Teutonicus* of Görlitz. His speculation was too much entangled in the notional forms of the positive dogma of the Church to allow him, with all the boldness of his brilliant intuitions, to attain a wide and impartial philosophical view of the entirety of historical religion. Nevertheless Jacob Böhme prepared the way for the philosophy of religion from the side of mystical intuition, from the side of divine wisdom profoundly steeped in feeling and strong in faith, while Giordano Bruno did the same from that of critical reflection, of a wisdom of the world, self-controlled and founded on reason. The conditions of an impartial philosophical investigation into religion are, however, found for the first time united in BENEDICT SPINOZA, a thinker equally characterised by piety and by depth of thought and independent judgment. He, the scientifically trained Jewish theologian who, expelled from the synagogue, was yet full of reverence for the biblical religion of the Old and New Testaments, was learned both in Jewish and Christian theology as well as in the philosophy that was independent of both, notably that of the gifted Bruno and the methodical Descartes. Besides which, he was a citizen of Amsterdam, who made it his aim to set the newly won political and religious freedom of the Netherlands upon the basis of philosophy, and to turn it to account on behalf of philosophy. With him

accordingly we enter upon the *first* period of the history of the philosophy of religion, which, in consequence of the essentially critical attitude which thought at first assumed with regard to positive religion, must be designated the *Critical Philosophy of Religion*. This period culminates in Kant, with whom, therefore, this section closes. In the *second* section will then fall to be delineated the tendency for which the way was already prepared by mysticism and theosophy—that, namely, of the *Intuitive Philosophy of Religion*, which, either opposing or ignoring criticism, is mainly and directly concerned with the immediate religious life of the soul. The combination and internal reconciliation of these two tendencies, the rational-critical and the mystical, or, as it may also be termed, poetical-intuitive, will be found in the *Speculative Philosophy of Religion*, from Fichte to Hegel, which will occupy the *third* section. The *fourth* section, finally, will give a survey of the different tendencies at work in the present day as represented by the chief schools of the last fifty years.

SECTION I.

THE CRITICAL PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION.

CHAPTER I.

BENEDICT SPINOZA.[1]

SPINOZA wrote his *Theologico-political Treatise* (published 1670) to prove that freedom of thought and of teaching in philosophy not only was without danger to the maintenance of religion and of civil order, but ought to be preserved from regard to their interests. With this object before him he seeks, in the first place, to show that theology and philosophy are to be strictly distinguished from each other, neither of them made subject to the other, and neither mixed up with the other, since each has its own sphere, in which it pursues its own ends in its own way without conflicting with the other. For the end of philosophy is nothing but *truth*, the knowledge of things in their connection with each other and with the being of God, while the end of theology or faith is, according to Spinoza, nothing but *obedience* and *piety*, the practical worship of God by keeping his commandments in righteousness and love. To this end and to this end only, were directed, in his view, all the doctrines of holy Scripture, all the revelations of the prophets and of Christ and his apostles; in this, but it is true in this alone, they were all at one, while in all their theoretical utterances we are able to point to the greatest differences and to manifold contradictions; and with this moral purport and

[1] Camerer, *die Lehre Spinoza's*; Sigwart, *Spinoza's neuentdeckter Traktat von Gott, dem Menschen, und dessen Glückseligkeit*, 1866; J. Martineau, *A Study of Spinoza*: London, 1882.

aim of holy Scripture and theology, reason and philosophy are also in complete agreement.

But Spinoza cannot of course deny that holy Scripture and theology contain many things in addition to their moral doctrines, viz., statements about God's attributes, his relation to the world, revelation, etc. Nor does he think of questioning the propriety of these statements or their value for piety. On the contrary, he himself enumerates a number of articles of belief, the acceptance of which necessarily belongs to piety, since there could be no obedience to God apart from them. Among these he reckons a belief in God's righteousness and mercy, or his moral perfection, his unity, omnipresence, omniscience, and his unrestricted rule over the world; further, the conviction that the service of God consists solely in obedience, namely, in righteousness and love of our neighbours, that all who obey God in these respects are saved, and all others lost, and finally, that God forgives the sins of those who repent. These, says Spinoza, are the doctrines which every one must know for the salvation of his soul, because to do away with them would be to do away with obedience.[1]

If this is so, how is the strict distinction between philosophy and theology to be upheld? Do not these articles of faith represent theoretical truths which enter deeply into the sphere of philosophy, and which anticipate the judgments of philosophy and set limits to her inquiries in fundamental questions? Are we perhaps to find that the asserted independence of philosophy and theology with respect to each other amounts to no more than a kind of equitable frontier-treaty, in which each party agrees to some curtailment of its freedom of motion in order not to offend the presuppositions and wishes of the other? This position contented the popular philosophy of the Illumination of the English Deists and the German Rationalists; but such an arrangement was not possible to a thinker like Spinoza. At first sight he appears to be precisely in the same track as the moral Deism of the English Illumination, yet soon we come to a very marked parting of the ways. This point deserves the most attentive consideration; it marks the boundary between the half Illumination

[1] *Opera, Tract. Theol.-Polit.* cap. xiv., ed. Van Vloten and Land, vol. i. p. 541.

of popular philosophy which never really escapes from dogmatism or attains to a philosophical knowledge of religion, and the thorough critical thought which first cast off the trammels of dogmatism and laid therewith the foundation-stone of the true Philosophy of Religion. Spinoza does not dispute the authority of the traditional religious views for the *practical* purposes of piety and morality, but at this point he is still far from a solution of the question whether or in how far they are to be held to be *theoretically* true.

What is the essential nature of God or of that moral ideal with which faith identifies him,—fire or spirit, light or thought? This, Spinoza continues in the above-cited passage, is of no consequence to faith; and similarly every one is at liberty to please himself with an answer to the question, in what sense God is the ideal of true life; if it is because he has a righteous and merciful disposition, or because all things are and work through him, and it is through him consequently that we know and can perceive what is true, right, and good. Further, it is of no importance to faith, whether a man supposes that God is everywhere present according to his being or according to his power; that his guidance of events results from freedom or from the necessity of his nature; that he prescribes the laws as sovereign or teaches them as eternal truths; that man obeys God of his free choice or from the necessity of a divine decree; or finally, that the reward of the good and the punishment of the wicked are natural or supernatural. What opinions a man holds on these and similar theoretical questions is quite immaterial as regards religious faith, if only his opinion be not such as to act unfavourably on practical morality. Every one in fact is not only entitled but bound to adjust and explain these theories of belief for himself in such a way as to make them as comprehensible as possible and as effective as possible as motives of hearty obedience to God. Now theoretical opinions by no means act on all men alike as motives to practical conduct; men's natures are arranged too differently to allow of all men finding satisfaction in the same views; what disposes one man to devotion and obedience is to another an object of ridicule and scorn. Thus what is important for faith is not so much the intel-

lectual truth of dogmas, but rather the piety of them; *i.e.* their capacity of moving the soul to obedience. There may be many dogmas which do not possess so much as a shadow of truth, and which may yet be wholesome for those who think them true, while to others thinking differently they are worthless. Not ignorance but disobedience is what holy Scripture condemns. Hence the piety or lack of piety of each man's faith is not to be judged according to the truth or falsehood of his religious opinions, but according to the obedience or disobedience of his life. The man who can bring forward the best arguments is not therefore necessarily in possession of the best faith, but the man who can point to the best works of righteousness and love.

Spinoza accordingly sees the religious value of dogmas not in their theoretical truth, but in their practical power of moving to action, and he therefore demands the right for every man to explain the doctrines handed down to him in the way best adapted for him. Nor is he afraid of the reproach of going to work in an arbitrary way, of impiety towards holy Scripture. On the contrary, he is convinced that an exposition which is not in bondage to the letter is best fitted to do justice to the spirit and the scope of Scripture. For the teachings of the prophets and the revelations of Moses did not by any means, as he shows, make it their chief aim to instruct the people about eternal truths by considerations of reason, or to demonstrate to them the nature of God, his method of working, and the connection of things; their main purpose was to impress the people's mind in such a way as to dispose it to obedience. The revelations of God through the prophets were perfectly adapted in the minds of the prophets to this practical end. For as purely reasonable considerations have far less effect on men's affections than the pictures of a lively imagination, it was quite natural and fitting that the prophets should receive the divine revelations not by pure reason, but with the assistance and in the forms of imagination. What distinguished the prophets from other people was not a higher knowledge, or a more perfect faculty of knowledge, which enabled them to give us valuable information on any particular branches of knowledge, on things

philosophical or physical; no, their superiority consisted, firstly, in their moral purity of disposition, and then in the liveliness of their imagination. On the former was based the moral kernel, on the latter the outward sensuous wrappings of their revelations. Now the latter, the mode of thought and speech to which their imagination gave birth, was admirably adapted, and indeed indispensable, to the object which alone they had in view, but it is not so well suited for the purely intellectual apprehension of things. For it is a fact of general experience, that those whose strength lies chiefly in their imagination are less qualified for a pure apprehension of things as they are; while, on the other hand, men of strong reason are gifted with a more moderate share of imagination, which they also curb more strictly lest it should get mixed up with their reasoning. To this rule the prophets formed no exception; the more lively their imagination was, the more defective was their apprehension by the reason. In all that did not bear on the moral object of the revelation in all questions of mere knowledge, whether about things natural or things spiritual, they accordingly shared the ignorance and the child-like ideas of their age and surroundings. As for their knowledge of God, in particular, it is true and pure only in so far as it has reference to the moral life and contains motives and ideals for the moulding of that life. But the prophets had no true knowledge of the nature and attributes of God as they really are, indeed they were entangled in sensuous ideas of God's likeness to men; they attributed to him human limbs and a human understanding, movement in space, and changeable affections, and conceived him as a Prince and Judge sitting on the throne of heaven and issuing from it his commands. Most theologians, Spinoza remarks on this, contend that such ideas when found in Scripture are to be explained metaphorically, as if the Scriptures had been written not for the people but for philosophers! The unbiassed expositor must acknowledge that divine revelation always accommodated itself to the imaginations and prejudices of the prophets as well as to their personal idiosyncrasies and stages of cultivation. If the prophet was of a cheerful disposition, victories and prosperous events were revealed to him; if

he was melancholy, he saw the future full of wars and other miseries; if by means of a happy imagination he was in command of an elegant diction, he perceived the divine thoughts also in a graceful style, whereas a prophet with a confused mind had an appropriately confused style of revelation. If he was a countryman he borrowed his ideas from the flock; if a soldier, from warfare; if a courtier, from the king's throne. The same circumstance, the accommodation of the revelation to the mind of the prophet, also serves to explain the numerous differences and discrepancies in their writings, as, for example, when one prophet conceives of God as everywhere present and another describes him as locally confined, or one speaks of God's omniscience, while another speaks of him as making inquiries, or one conceives him as eternal and unchangeable, and another makes him repent of his purposes and change them. From all this Spinoza concludes that prophecy never made the prophets better instructed, but left them in their preconceived opinions, and that we are therefore by no means bound to believe them where it is a question merely of "speculative" things. It is otherwise with things relating to uprightness and good conduct; for in these things the prophets are in accord with each other as well as with reasonable thinking. On closer examination, however, even this assent to the moral element of the doctrine of revelation undergoes a considerable modification with Spinoza, at least in so far as revelation is framed in positive statutes.

Religion being essentially obedience to the divine law, the question arises what we are to understand by this law. In the fourth chapter of his *Theologico-political Treatise* Spinoza discusses the notion of the *divine law.* He understands it to be that law which has for its sole subject and aim the highest good, namely, the true knowledge and love of God. This law, he shows, is not the code of a particular people, but is universally valid, and common to all men, for it can be shown to be derived from universal human nature. For inasmuch as the better part of our nature is the intellect, our highest good must consist in the perfecting of the intellect or in true knowing; now the true knowledge of things, the effects, involves the true knowledge of God, the cause; and thus all

our knowledge, and consequently our highest good, depends on the knowledge of God, indeed consists entirely in that knowledge. To strive after this is accordingly the highest law, which follows from the nature of man as a rational creature. This law requires no support, no foundation in the belief of any narratives; for as the natural law of God it may be perfectly recognised and known from the contemplation of human nature, which is always and everywhere the same. No historical faith, how certain soever it be, can certify us of the love of God; for the love of God springs from the knowledge of God, and the knowledge of God must be drawn from common notions which are in themselves certain. As little as any other knowledge derived from experience can a knowledge of the narratives of the Bible help us to a clear knowledge of the being of God and of the method of his preservation and government of the world. Historical faith is only for the people, to whom the true knowledge is impossible; to them it may prove a useful and necessary substitute, as striking examples may favourably influence the mind in the direction of the practical ends of religion; but he who is led to what is good by the natural light of reason can be saved as well without these narratives as the people with them, and even better, because in addition to true opinions he has also a clear and definite notion. And as the natural divine law does not require a historical belief, so neither does it require ceremonies or acts which, in themselves indifferent, are counted good merely in consequence of a command or institution, or because they serve to represent something that is good; such things cannot help to perfect our intellect, and are not fruits of sound sense; they are therefore mere shadows which have nothing to do with the highest good or with salvation. And finally, the divine law is in no need of external rewards or punishments, for its highest reward is what itself contains, namely, to know God and to love him with true freedom, with the whole undivided heart, and its punishment is just the want of this happiness and the slavery of the flesh, or the changeful and wavering heart.

Thus Spinoza places what he calls the "natural divine law," not only in opposition to the positive revealed law, but in every respect

above it. But he goes still further, and pronounces the whole notion of a divine "legislation," understood in the traditional sense as a declaration of the divine will analogous to the declaration made in the laws of a state, to be incompatible with the true notion of God. He sets out with the statement that in God intellect and will are one and the same, and that the distinction of them rests solely on the variety of ways in which we may regard the relation of God to the finite. With respect to God, he proceeds to explain, it is quite the same whether we say that he *determined* from eternity, or that he *knew* from eternity, that the sum of the angles of a triangle should be equal to two right angles: if we regard this relation as founded in the nature of the triangle, and therefore as being a necessary and eternal truth, we conceive it as the object of the divine knowledge: but if we reflect on the dependent nature of this truth, and consider the nature of the triangle as arising out of the one and sole necessity of the divine nature, then it is to us a determination of the divine will. Hence it follows that the affirmations and negations of God always contain an eternal necessity or truth—a position which is of cardinal importance in Spinoza's system. Where, then, there is an adequate knowledge of God, there the divine law is known as the eternal truth and necessity of the divine nature, as it manifests itself in the nature of things, and especially in that of man. Where, on the contrary, the adequate knowledge of God is wanting, as was the case with Moses and the prophets, but not with Christ (as Spinoza expressly observes), there the Divine law is represented, not as eternal truth and necessity, but as a body of divine commands and institutions, and hence it was that men made imaginary representations of God as a leader, a legislator, a king, as One just and merciful, and so on, while all these are only attributes of human nature, and ought to be kept quite apart from the divine. It is obvious that Spinoza here pronounces the moral elements of positive religion, as he formerly did the "speculative" elements, in so far as they have a positive, statutory character, and are distinct from the natural divine law, to be products of the inadequate or imagining way of thinking. If this be so, then the

critical line of division between phenomenal, relative, temporary truth, and real, necessary, eternal truth, no longer coincides (as it appeared to do at first) with the distinction between the theoretical and the moral elements of positive religion; the *whole of positive religion* falls as such on the first side, and on the other side there comes to stand only what we should characterise, in Spinoza's sense, as the "religion of reason." In fact, Spinoza declares, at the conclusion of this discussion, that what the contemners of the natural light of reason were accustomed to boast of as the specific ground of superiority of positive, revealed religion, what was said to be "above reason," was a mere imagination, and, indeed, far beneath reason.

The case is the same in his view with the so-called "supernatural," or *miracle*, in religious tradition; the multitude is accustomed to call whatever transcends its comprehension a work of God, because it is not acquainted with the natural causes of it (in the world of nature or the human imagination), and to regard such occurrences as special proofs of the divine power and providence.

But the traditional opinion that the belief in God and in providence stands or falls with the belief in miracles is based, as Spinoza shows, on the mistaken notion that God is not working so long as nature works in her accustomed order, and that, on the other hand, so long as God is working, the power of nature and natural causes are laid to rest. The divine power is conceived as the rule of a prince, that of nature as blind force. The Jews especially were under a strong tendency from an early age to find evidence in miracles for the superiority of their God over the gods of the heathens, and sought to prove in this way that the whole of nature was directed by the commands of their God with a view to their exclusive benefit; and the belief in miracles is always flattering to human vanity, for men imagine that God created and rules the whole world for their sake. But this involves a false notion of the divine will as well as of nature. The will of God is not distinct from his intelligence, and neither is distinct from his essence; so that every determination of the divine will involves an eternal necessity and truth, and these determinations, following on the necessity and per-

fection of the divine nature, are the general laws of nature. Now, if anything took place in nature that contradicted these laws of hers, it would also contradict the Divine will and understanding and essence, so that God, in bringing about a result contrary to the laws of nature, would be working against his own nature, a most absurd idea. Nothing, therefore, can happen in nature that contradicts or transcends its laws; there cannot be anything above nature any more than anything contrary to nature, because the power of nature is as infinite and limitless as the power of God. If, accordingly, there are no real miracles or supernatural occurrences in nature, the notion of miracles can only be of subjective importance; it can only express the idea formed by the narrator of an occurrence he deemed supernatural, the natural causes not being known to him, and not being known, perhaps, even now. But for this very reason, that the idea of miracle is based on ignorance of natural causes, it can afford no true and certain notion of God's being, omnipotence, or government of the world; on the contrary, the only ground from which we can with certainty deduce these truths is the clearly recognised order and law-abiding character of nature. And thus the belief in miracles is not only not necessary to the certainty of the belief in God, it is not even helpful to that belief. We need not go into particulars as to the method by which Spinoza seeks to explain some of the Biblical miracles; it is enough to observe that he takes up the half-critical position of taking for granted that what is narrated actually occurred, merely seeking the explanation of it in natural instead of supernatural causes. He does not take the last step of rigorous criticism, that of removing the whole miraculous narrative from the sphere of the real to that of the ideal; and instead of seeking to explain the narrative of the miracle by natural causes, explaining the belief in the miracle from the facts and motives present to the mind of the narrator.

This criticism of the notion of miracles has brought us to the very heart of Spinoza's philosophical view of the world, which hinges on the same two thoughts as that criticism; first, *that God is not the outer* (*transiens*) *cause of all things, but the inner* (*immanens*) *cause*;[1]

[1] Ep. xxi. (lxxiii.) *Opp.* ii. 239.

and second, that this cause does not work arbitrarily in the way of free choice, but that *all its operations follow from its nature as necessarily* as the properties of the triangle from its nature, and that thus all things and occurrences are necessarily determined by their causal connection with other things and occurrences, and ultimately by their being based in the cause of the whole, or in God. This "inevitable necessity of things" Spinoza, in one passage of his writings,[1] plainly calls "the chief foundation" of all his arguments in the *Theological Treatise.* This point deserves to be attentively considered; here we have the keystone of the whole system, and are placed in a position to discern its psychological genesis in the mind of the thinker. It will not be expected that we should here enter into the details of the wide controversies recently raised as to the sources of the Spinozistic philosophy; yet I may here state my view of this question.

It is impossible to deduce the cardinal principles of the system of Spinoza from Cartesianism by simple dialectical development of the latter. For just at its two cardinal points stated above, namely, its immanence and its determinism, the Spinozistic philosophy is from the very outset most pronouncedly opposed to the Cartesian doctrine, which is dualistic and indeterminist. The recently discovered *Treatise of God and Man and his Happiness* shows this distinctly. From Descartes Spinoza adopted merely the form, the mathematical method, of which no doubt he might be the more willing to avail himself, that its inexorable strictness in the logical connection of cause and effect might seem to furnish the most natural and the most adequate expression for that "inevitable necessity" which he saw in the actual connection of things. But this mathematical method which he adopted from Descartes was nothing more than the form in which Spinoza cast the thoughts which had already assumed certainty in his mind; the thoughts by no means grew out of or along with the form. This is clear from his earlier writings, in which he does not employ this form at all, and yet sets forth that very metaphysic which he taught in his later works.

[1] Ep. xxiii. (lxxv.) *Opp.* ii. 242.

If we ask what may have been the sources or the suggestive types of the Spinozistic philosophy, we are directed to Giordano Bruno and to the Jewish philosophy of religion (Maimonides, Chasdai Cresca), and these two sources point back in their turn to the Christian and Arabian-Jewish theosophy and mysticism of the Middle Ages: Scotus Erigena, Master Eckhart, Nicolaus Cusanus, on the one side, Averroës, Avicebron, on the other. And in fact the affinity of the Spinozistic pantheism with these circles of thought is so obvious, and the probability so great that Spinoza was acquainted with these philosophers, that it is difficult to doubt that he was influenced from these directions. Yet we must take care not to exaggerate the amount of this influence, and, least of all, that of the Jewish religious philosophers. With all their inclination to Neoplatonic transcendentalism, they yet always adhered to the theistic view of God and the creation, a view implying the possibility of miracles. The relationship to Giordano Bruno is closer, yet here also there are differences which we cannot overlook. In the first place, Bruno's supreme principle, in which, after the true style of Neoplatonism, all differences disappear, all positions are both denied and affirmed, and which for this very reason is "the incomprehensible," is, after all, by no means identical with the substance of Spinoza, in which the two attributes of extension and thought are so clearly distinguished, and the clear and definite knowableness of which is one of Spinoza's cardinal principles. Again, the metaphysics of Bruno are by no means without a teleological principle; matter, in which is soul, bears in itself the forms of things, and is therefore called the mother, the bringer-forth of things (p. 24, *seq.*). Spinoza, on the contrary, rejects in the most distinct way every kind of teleology, and teaches exclusively the causal determination of things by each other and by God, the first cause. Even if, then, Spinoza borrowed his pantheism, his identification of God and nature, from Bruno and others, it received in his hands an entirely original turn, since he made it the basis of a purely causal determinism.

This principle of causality, inexorably strict, but also, it must be allowed, harsh and one-sided, is what is most peculiar to Spinoza;

the idea of the *law-abidingness of the world, considered quite objectively, and strictly dissociated from all subjective interests* (usefulness, beauty, morality), emerges in him with all the energy of a newly-discovered principle, and determines the direction of philosophy both in him and his successors. This conception was not unknown, indeed, to the great students of nature in those stirring times of the Renaissance, such as Copernicus, Galilei, Gassendi, Newton, and Kepler; but to make the idea of inviolable, all-governing law, or of an essentially necessary order of things, which formed the foundation-stone of the natural sciences, the foundation also of a complete metaphysical, and even religious and moral, view of the world, this no one had done so thoroughly before Spinoza; this was his personal achievement, the pregnant consequences of which for the history of human thought must not the less be acknowledged, that we see so plainly the one-sidedness which led him to oppose the newly-found principle of the world's *conformity to law* to the principle of the world's *purpose*, as if the two were contrary and incompatible. It is the great defect of his system that he refuses so absolutely to recognise the notion of purpose in any form; but the excessive zeal which led to this is easily to be explained from the fact undeniably taught us by experience that with the view of purpose, which comes so easily to help the thought of the vulgar, there are inseparably bound up all those subjective prejudices and delusions which, to the mass of men, make objective thought impossible, and with objective thought the knowledge of things as they are in themselves, according to the naked truth of them. In false teleology Spinoza sees for one thing the ultimate foundation of religious delusion; for, as he explains at the close of the first book of the *Ethics*, as men look at things without knowledge of their inner conformity to law, and from the purely egoistic point of view, asking merely as to the usefulness or hurtfulness of them in relation to their private ends, they are led to suppose the existence of one or more rulers of nature who guide events in arbitrary fashion with a view to the advantage or disadvantage of men, and thus they make all things depend on themselves. Now, in order to move these Gods or this God to direct the whole of nature so as to

favour their blind desire and insatiable avarice, they have invented various ways of serving him and pleasing him, and have thus been led to all sorts of superstitious practices. "To what delusions has this ultimately led! Since among the manifold blessings of nature there occur also certain evils, such as storms, earthquakes, sicknesses, men have conceived the reason of this to be that the gods were angry at the injuries done to them by men, or at the mistakes committed in their worship (sins); and though experience spoke every day against such a notion, and showed by countless examples that prosperous and adverse events happen to the wicked and the good without distinction, yet they have not desisted from their deeply-rooted prejudice. For it was easier for them to reckon this along with the other unknown things, the use of which they did not know, and so to keep their present and natural condition of ignorance, than to give up the whole of that baseless fabric, and think out a new system. Accordingly they held it to be certain that the decrees of God far transcend man's understanding; and this would certainly have had the effect of concealing the truth from the human race for ever, had not mathematics, which deals not with purposes but with the nature and properties of figures, showed to men another standard of truth; and other causes, too, besides mathematics (astronomical, physical discoveries), can be adduced, by which it might happen that men should open their eyes to those common prejudices, and be led to the true knowledge of things." As teleology is the cause of mistaken ideas in religion, it also, according to Spinoza, renders impossible a sound knowledge of nature; for it leads men away, instead of thinking out the connection of causes which are at work, to have recourse to the will of God, *i.e.* to the *asylum ignorantiæ*. "Hence it comes that he who seeks after the true causes of miracles, and who would understand nature as a man of learning, not gape at her like a fool, is everywhere regarded as a heretic and godless person, and denounced by those whom the people worship as interpreters of nature and of God; for these are well aware that with the removal of ignorance they will lose their only means of defending their authority."

From these arguments we gather that Spinoza's conflict with

arbitrary teleology is directed to the practical purpose of making man free from the miserable bondage in which the union of subjective imagination with selfish desire has enchained him. And this inference is exactly confirmed, when he shows in a later passage that the true freedom and blessedness of man consist in a clear knowledge of the unalterable order of the world, and in a willing resignation to it, or in love to God, which shuts out both all caprice of thought and all selfishness of desire. Spinoza destroys the idols man has made by his imagination working towards an egoistical self-glorification, which by ignoring the true law and order of things leads to the worst of slavery under them; but he shows him in the knowledge of the eternal divine order of the world the way to the true freedom, which, in its unity with the reasonable law of the whole, at the same time lifts up man's own reason to the rule and dignity which are its due. We must understand the Spinozistic philosophy from this point of view if we are to estimate aright its importance for the development not only of philosophical, but of religious thought. For all his boldness in assailing traditional opinions, Spinoza is as little an enemy of true religious faith as Luther was when boldly attacking the statutes of Rome; if the latter helped faith to its true freedom by breaking its dependence on human caprice and pointing to the true revelation of God in the human conscience, Spinoza supplemented this work of liberation on the side of theoretical thought or the wisdom of the world by freeing the religious consciousness from its slavery under the images of subjective imagination and selfish passion, and pointing to the true revelation of God in the eternal laws of the world's order. Grave as were the defects in his philosophy, which had to be corrected by his successors, the fundamental thought of the inviolably regular order of the world forms the sure foundation of all subsequent philosophy, and of the whole modern view of the world.

In these remarks we have taken a general view of the bearings of Spinozism, and sought to clear the way for an unbiassed appreciation of a thinker who has been greatly misunderstood. We have now to look a little more closely at the chief points of the Spinozistic meta-

physics, so far as they concern the philosophy of religion, as they are set forth in the *Ethics* (1st and 2d books).

God, Spinoza understands to be the absolutely infinite being, or the Substance which consists of infinite attributes, each of which expresses an eternal and infinite being. As by "substance" he understands that which is in itself and is understood through itself, the nature of which accordingly involves existence, the notion of God as the one infinite substance at once implies his existence; but this is also proved in the following manner: not to be able to exist is a want of power, to be able to exist is a power; if then what exists were merely the finite, this would be more powerful than the infinite, which is impossible. Either, then, nothing exists, or the infinite exists also. Now, we at least exist, whether in ourselves or in another. Therefore the infinite or God exists of necessity. This proof *a posteriori* is supplemented by a proof *a priori;* to be able to exist is a power; the more reality adheres to a being the more power must it have to exist; hence the infinite being or God must have in himself infinite power to exist, and therefore exists absolutely. Or shortly: as non-existence is an imperfection, the perfection of a being does not do away with its existence, but involves it—a mode of proof, it is true, which simply assumes the reality of the notion, the very point the syllogism apparently proposed to demonstrate. Thus we learn from the first example we encounter of the syllogistic form of demonstration that it is by no means entitled to that unlimited confidence in the field of philosophy which Spinoza claimed for it; and that the exclusive use of it, according to the mathematical method, is not the strongest, but rather the weakest side of his philosophy; and we shall not linger over his mathematical demonstrations.

As beside the one infinite substance there can be no other, all that is must be thought as being in God, or as a manner of existence (*modus*) of the infinite substance, of which an infinite number follow from the necessity of the divine nature, or are brought about by God as the infinite first cause. God, accordingly, is not a cause that is external and works with free will, but the indwelling cause, work-

ing from the pure necessity of his nature. The freedom of God consists just in this, that he is subject to no foreign compulsion, to no determination from without, but works only from himself, out of his own nature; it does not consist in this, that he might determine arbitrarily to work or not to work, to work in this way or in a different way; on the contrary, his working is so necessarily determined by the laws of his nature, as it is necessarily given in the nature of the triangle, that its angles are equal to two right angles. The divine omnipotence is not thought more perfect if we suppose that it cannot really make all that God can think as possible; on the contrary, its perfection consists just in this, that it abides from eternity to eternity in the same actuality out of which all that is real has proceeded with necessity, and always with the same necessity proceeds (or "follows," a logical notion not implying time, with which Spinoza here corrects the previously-used physical notion of "emanation"). As for the ordinary idea of the divine working, according to which it is conceived as an acting according to human analogy with understanding and free choice, this idea is rejected by Spinoza for more reasons than one. First of all, because an understanding and will like that of man does not appear to him compatible with the nature of God. For a divine understanding could not like ours presuppose the existence of things, being itself the cause both of the essence and of the existence of things, and in so far identical with the will and the power of God; and again, understanding and will in God can have nothing in common with that which is in us any more than the constellation of the Dog can have anything in common with the barking animal of that name. True, there are in God understanding and will, but only as a definite *modus* of the divine thought, or of God as we contemplate his being under the attribute of thought, *i.e.* as single finite acts of thought and desire, which belong as such to *natura naturata*, *i.e.* to the finite effects of God, not to *natura naturans*, *i.e.* to the efficient infinite cause as such. Understanding and will are related to the divine nature just as motion and rest; these are constant modes of appearance of the divine attribute of extension, or of the primal force as working in matter, and under-

standing and will are constant modes of appearance of the divine attribute of thought, or of the primal force as working in idea. "Infinite reason" is spoken of by Spinoza in the same sense as infinite motion; both are infinite *modi* just because they are the permanent forms in which the divine activity manifests itself, on the one side in the sum of all acts of thought, on the other in the sum of all motions. But as motion and rest and all other modes of appearance of the divine causality follow in such a way from the necessity of the divine nature that they are infallibly determined by it to existence and to a definite operation, so is it also with the will in relation to the nature of God; the individual acts of will are just as unconditionally determined by the divine nature as thinking, as the acts of motion are by the divine nature as extended; there is no such thing as freedom of the will in the sense of indeterminateness or fortuitousness, any more than there is any such thing as chance in the nexus of material occurrences. And from all this there results the doctrine, which is fundamental for Spinoza's view of the world: "Things could not be produced by God in any other way or in other order than that in which they have been produced." As their existence and their connection together are determined by the necessity of the divine nature, any other order of nature would presuppose another nature of God, and is as impossible as this. And this would still be the case if we went back not to the nature of God but to his will and his decrees; for since his decrees are formed from eternity, and there can be in God no before or after, so there never was and never is a time when God could frame other decrees, or when he could wish to annul those he had once formed, and to bring about a different order of nature from that determined from eternity. As certainly as the divine will is perfect, so certainly is it impossible to assume that it could will or bring about things in any other way than it does bring them about. Spinoza concludes this discussion with the characteristic remark that those who make everything depend on the unconditioned will and pleasure of God seem to him to err less widely from the truth than those who make God do everything in relation to goodness (*sub ratione boni*). For these appear to assume something

outside of God and not dependent on God to which God looks in his acts as to a type, and to which he directs himself, as to an aim. But this would be in truth simply to subject God, who is confessed to be the first and the only free cause of every essence and existence, to a fate; and there could be no greater absurdity. Thus even the idea of goodness as an end appears to Spinoza to be an illegitimate limitation of the operation of God, which in its inner causal necessity is perfect and free. Why is he not able to recognise, in the thought of the good as an end, the free self-determination of God, which would not exclude the necessity of his operation or the regular causality of the world-order, but include it as the necessary means for the self-set end? Because in fixing the relation between the attributes of God, thought and extension, he is unable to transcend the mechanical dualism of Descartes, and hence cannot arrive at the rule of the ideal over the real in his absolute world-ground.

Spinoza had called God the substance which consists of infinite attributes, but of these he only speaks of the two attributes of *thought* and *extension* as the two most general and not further reducible forms of expression, or powers in which the one substance is operative. From the divine power of thought (*cogitandi potentia* or *virtus*) follow the definite *modi* of thought, or *ideas*, as from extension the *modi* of actual extension, or *bodies*. Every bodily thing has its ground in God only so far as it is regarded under the attribute of extension, and every ideal (formal) being has its ground only in God as thinking being. Each of the two attributes has its effects only within its own sphere, and not on the side of the other attribute; the one therefore does not in any way act on the other; the two chains of effects run side by side, each series corresponding to the other but not depending on the other; "the order and connection of the ideas is the same as the order and connection of the things." Hence Spinoza draws the important conclusion that God's power of thought is equal to his power of work. Thus between the divine thought and act there is no relation of superiority and subordination, determining and being determined; they stand side by side as independent powers, each sovereign in its own sphere, and held together only by

the one common substance, which embraces them in itself as its two different and independent sides.

This has important consequences in Spinoza's doctrine of man, as man represents in the two sides of his nature the two divine attributes. The human body is a definite actually existing *modus* of extension, the human mind is the idea or *modus* of the divine thought, corresponding to it, and thus a part of the infinite understanding of God. There is, it is true, in God an idea of every other body too; but these ideas are of different nature, for each of them is always the more perfect the more perfect their object the body is; the more suited the latter is to do or to suffer many things at the same time, the more suited is its mind to perceive many things at once, and the more the actions of the body depend on it alone and are little influenced by the co-operation of other bodies, the more capable is its mind of clear knowledge. Now, as the human body is a whole composed of very numerous parts, so the idea which forms the human mind is also composed of very numerous ideas, and in consequence of this the human mind is the best qualified for the richest knowledge. For all knowledge rests on the perception of the ways in which our own bodies are affected by other bodies; and the more manifold these affections are, the richer are the materials of knowledge presented to the mind.

These lines of thought might seem to have in them a decided tendency to sensualism and materialism; but Spinoza guarded against this from the first by making the human mind be accompanied by the idea of itself, of this mind or of this idea of a body, in the same way as the body is accompanied by the mind. True, this assertion is difficult to reconcile with the principle spoken of above, that every *modus* of thought answers to a *modus* of extension, and that the order and connection of ideas is the same as that of things; for the idea of the mind, being an "idea of an idea," has no immediate modus of extension to correspond with it, and the ideas thus come to be in the majority as against things, which destroys the asserted equality of the two parallel series. But it is all the more significant, that in spite of the equality of thought and extension from which he set out,

Spinoza yet found himself compelled to make such a concession to the mind and endow it with the idea of itself, with its own self-consciousness, whereby the mind is directed to itself, becomes comparatively independent of what is without it, and is made capable, as against the body and its affections, of independent action. In so far it is quite correct to say that the notion of the *idea mentis* is indispensable to Spinoza's doctrine, because without this notion it might easily be misunderstood in one of its most essential points; only this does not prove, and it might scarcely admit of proof, that this notion stands in strict and logical connection with the metaphysical principles of the system, especially the doctrine of the attributes of the divine substance.

Human knowledge proceeds from the affections of the body or the impressions of the senses, which present themselves without connection, fortuitously, from moment to moment, and in which our own activity and passivity and that of others is mixed up indiscriminately. This knowledge, at the lowest stage, is necessarily a confused, inadequate, mistaken knowledge, the knowledge of opinion or imagination. Spinoza mentions as an example of this the idea of free will, or the opinion men hold that the acts they do of which they do not know the determining causes depend on indeterminate will. He also mentions here class notions, many of which proceed from a confusion of a number of different conceptions. On the second stage stands the knowledge of reason, which rises from particulars to general notions, or to an adequate idea of that which the individuals have in common with each other. The third and highest kind of knowledge is that of the inductive understanding, which rises from adequate knowledge of general notions so derived to the highest notion, that of God and of his attributes; this knowledge is not only true, like that of the second stage, but is also immediately certain and the principle of all truth and certainty. For he who has a true idea is also clearly conscious of it, and can as little doubt the truth of the matter as he who sees light can doubt that he sees it.

Spinoza compares these three stages of knowledge[1] with the three

[1] In the Treatise *Of God*, etc., chap. xix., note 1.

stages of the religious and moral process of salvation, false opinion with sin, true faith with the law which accuses us of sin, and true knowledge with grace which sets us free from sin. He thus indicates, not obscurely, that the three stages are of importance not only to the theory of knowledge but also practically. Indeed the theoretical and the practical spirit are never disjoined in him, the powerlessness and want of freedom of the former is also the servitude and want of blessedness of the other, and the way to moral freedom and religious salvation leads through the liberation of the knowing mind from error and delusion. Thus his speculation, like that of Bruno his predecessor, and that of his later antithesis Fichte, becomes at last a philosophical doctrine of salvation, in which abstract theories are transformed under his hand into active motives, and specially into quietives for the human soul.

Spinoza laid the foundation of this philosophical doctrine of salvation in the proposition, which is important for his system, *Will and intellect are one and the same.* For so he demonstrates this proposition—the will does not consist of a general unlimited power, but of single acts of affirmation or denial, which are identical with conceptions, that is, acts of thought. Now our other acts of conception are not arbitrary in reference to the truth or falsehood of a thing, and as little are those affirmations and denials arbitrary which we call acts of will (*volitiones*). Spinoza, however, means by this notion not the desire or abhorrence itself, but, as we may fill up his aphoristic statement,[1] the judgments of the practical spirit as to what is worthy to be desired or abhorred. What he seeks to prove is simply that the practical judgments are, as little as the theoretical, the subject of free will, of choice and arbitrariness, but that the human mind, as it is nothing but a definite mode of existence of the divine thought, is thoroughly determined in every one of its acts of judgment.

Spinoza therefore declares in a preliminary remark to the third

[1] The relation of these notions, intellect, judgment, will, desire, is not clearly and consistently defined by Spinoza. On the various fluctuations of meaning, comp. Martineau, *A Study of Spinoza*, p. 232.

book of the *Ethics*, in which he treats of the affections, that he does not propose to sit in judgment on them in the ordinary manner of the moralists, nor to be angry at them nor make merry over them, but simply seeks to understand them as natural effects of natural causes. The affections are partly those in which the mind is active, partly those in which it is passive. The active affections proceed only from adequate ideas; the passions, on the contrary, from inadequate ideas, in which the mind is involved in the confused impression of external things. Now the human mind, like everything else that exists, has a striving to maintain itself in its own being, but its being is made up simply of its adequate or inadequate ideas, the affections of the body having specially to be reckoned among the latter. The striving to maintain itself in these its conditions at one time or another, along with the consciousness of the striving, is desire, longing, wish, which accordingly is a thing belonging to the whole man, not belonging, like the affirmations of the will, to the mind alone. Desire, or a single definite movement of the tendency to self-preservation, is always determined by one of the two fundamental affections, joy or grief, in which the mind becomes aware of a furtherance or a hindrance of its whole life, both bodily and mental. If joy or grief be accompanied by the idea of its cause, there arises love or hatred, the two strongest affections. We need not here follow out the deduction of the other affections from these fundamental ones, interesting as it is.

Under the influence of the passions man is in a state of slavery, for he is moved by outward causes, his capacity for action is arrested, and thus in part denied, he is a part of nature, a link, devoid of independence, of the causal nexus of things. But this state is not that which answers to man's true nature. For the essential part of man is his power to act of himself according to the laws of his nature, but in passion this power is destroyed by the influence of outward causes, namely, the outward provocations which excite the passionate affections. In addition to this, passion sets men at variance with each other, and in this way each man's striving for self-preservation is arrested by conflict with others.

The question arises: Can an end be put to this slavery, and by what means? It will certainly not be put an end to by commandments, exhortations, moral sermons, and the like. For "an affection can only be curbed or destroyed by an opposite stronger affection." This is the reason, too, why the knowledge of good and evil, in so far as it is merely true, nothing but insight and theory, cannot curb any affection; it can do this only in so far as it is itself an affection, and one of a stronger nature than that which is to be overcome. Thus the one point to be determined is, whether there are in human nature affections of another kind and of stronger force than those of the passions? If these can be shown to exist, then the way is pointed out to overcome the slavery of man, or the way to freedom. And this is just the problem of the *Ethics* (treated in the 4th and 5th books), the only problem which they are qualified and called to solve.

There are indeed, according to Spinoza, affections of joy and of desire in addition to the passions which are related to the mind as *active;* namely, those which arise out of the knowledge of adequate ideas, for of these the mind itself is the cause, and in them it becomes aware of its own power of action, and feels joy in this experience. Now virtue, according to Spinoza, is nothing but the power or faculty to act in conformity to the laws of one's own nature, or, which is the same thing, to maintain one's own being; the impulse to self-preservation is the first and only foundation of virtue; what furthers it is called good, what hurts it, evil. But the proper being of man is just to be active according to the peculiar laws of his own nature; *i.e.* reasonable knowledge, and the action which is dictated by it. Virtuous action is therefore the same as action under the guidance of reason, and both amount to preserving a man's own being and striving for his own advantage. But the mind, so far as it is reasonable, can only find its advantage in what is truly serviceable to knowledge; this alone can we with certainty regard as the good, and the opposite of this as evil. Hence it results that the highest good and the highest virtue of the mind is the knowledge of God.

This mystical turn is first briefly indicated in Spinoza's *Ethics*,[1] but is afterwards returned to and dealt with at more length.[2] It is the more surprising when we consider the naturalistic character of the premises from which this conclusion is deduced. The propositions that the impulse to self-preservation is the sole basis of virtue, that the good is the useful, and that he is most thoroughly equipped with virtue and most useful to his fellow-men who is most eager and most competent to seek his own profit, certainly have a very questionable sound. It looks as if such premises could only lead to eudæmonistic and egoistic morals of prudence, in which the good would be degraded from the rank of the unconditioned or the holy to a conditioned and relative thing, a means of selfishness. Yet this by no means proves to be the case with the Ethics of Spinoza. To judge it correctly we must take care never to lose sight of its fundamental principle, that all morality rests on the spontaneous activity of reason, this divine element in man, and is radically and specifically different from the unfree impulse of passion. Now it was essentially necessary for Spinoza to point out the psychological processes by which reason, the better part of our nature, is enabled to gain control over the lower life of impulse. He saw very clearly that this cannot be done by abstract notions and theoretical insight. His proposition that an affection can only be overcome by an affection, and that the knowledge of good has conquering power not as theory but only as affection, contains an indisputable and important truth. But how is it to come about that reason shall act as an affection, if it is not implanted in human nature as a real motive, if it does not strive as a natural reasonable impulse to assert and manifest itself in the same way psychologically as the other motives? Looking at the question from this side, we shall not feel entitled to call it a mistake in Spinoza, that he traces the psychological root of morality up to the fundamental impulse of self-preservation of the human being. I should almost be inclined to think this a point of superiority of the Ethics of Spinoza

[1] Book iv. prop. 26-28. [2] Book v.

over those of Kant.[1] Both start from the principle of autonomous reason as the divine and free element in man, who, apart from it, is a link, devoid of freedom, in the mechanism of nature; but Kant limits autonomous reason to the abstract and colourless imperative, and, putting aside every emotional element, cuts the roots of its real power, and the psychological means by which it is brought into action: Spinoza, on the contrary, traces these roots, and seeks to show how reason can act as an affection. Thus he combines the rational and the emotional ethical principle, one of which was afterwards taken up by Kant and the other by Schopenhauer. Here, it appears to me, the Ethics of Spinoza have the advantage. Their weak point and the source of their various defects are to be found in this, that Spinoza finds reason, which he makes the basis of morality, only in knowing, in the conscious possession of adequate ideas, and hence sets up as the basis of morality the intellectual impulse alone, which of all others has the remotest connection with morality and the faintest influence on it; while he completely overlooks its actual basis in the practical reasonable impulses (the social impulse, the impulse of love, of justice, etc.). In these impulses and the affections in which they manifest themselves (the heroic affections Bruno called them) Spinoza might indeed have found that which he sought with so much justice, the motive powers of reason to overcome the lower affections or selfish passions; but that the mere joy in adequate ideas is this power is a wholly unnatural opinion, and one contradicted by experience, to which Spinoza was led away just by the one-sided theoretical notion he had formed of reason. It is also easy to see that this mistake of Spinoza's Ethics is intimately connected with that of his metaphysics. In the latter, thought and extension are placed together in so external a fashion that they do not act on each other, their effects merely run together in parallel lines. If this be so, then reason and the organic impulses in man can be in no inner relation, cannot interpenetrate each other; the

[1] I have found a similar judgment up to this time only in Jodl's excellent *Geschichte der neueren Ethik* (i. 332, *seq.*). The *Ethics* of Spinoza, in which a Goethe all his life found edification, are almost universally spoken of with disparagement.

former is restricted to its separate sphere of forming ideas or of knowing, and in the most favourable circumstances (though even this is problematical) may, by the satisfaction it finds there, disarm the impulses and restore the rest of "passionlessness," the quiet peace of which may perhaps suffice the solitary thinker, but in the case of the man of action is a poor substitute for positive moral energy.

The way from the slavery of the passions to the freedom of reason is described in the fifth book of the *Ethics*. The point of departure is the thesis established in an earlier part of the work, that the affection which is passive ceases to be so as soon as we form a clear idea of it; for as a passive state it is a confused idea, and this is removed by the clear idea. In forming the latter we are in a state of knowing, we are active, and no more passive. Now what is involved in having a clear idea of an affection? First of all that we think of the cause of it not as isolated and fortuitous, but as a necessary link in the causal nexus of things; we comfort ourselves the more easily for the loss of any good when we see that it is impossible to keep it; we do not pity children on account of their infantile weakness, because we recognise it as necessary, whereas if the greater number were born grown up, and only one here and there as a child, we should undoubtedly deplore the imperfection of these as a defect or a sin. Again, it weakens the power of an affection, if we are able to trace it to several different causes, as this makes each of them individually less important, and the mind, contemplating the various causes, escapes from the confinement of suffering, and regains its activity. Especially does Spinoza recommend for the stage at which men have not yet arrived at full knowledge, nor in consequence at full mastery over the affections, as a means of bridling the latter, that they should form a definite way of living or definite principles, by making clear to themselves and impressing on their memory what experience shows to be the bearing of the affections on each other (*e.g.* that hatred is more readily overcome by generosity than by answering hatred), so as to have the proper principle at hand when the occasion arises, though only as a piece of knowledge gained by experience, or of deeper intuitive insight.

Yet this knowledge of the second stage, or that of "true faith," *i.e.* of knowledge which is certainly correct, but only the fruit of experience, gained by induction, does not lead at once, or by itself, to perfect peace and quiet of the spirit. This only arises from the third stage of knowledge, in which man contemplates things and himself according to their timeless nature and ground, under the form of eternity or in God. For—thus does Spinoza prove this position—this kind of knowledge gives the quieting and joyful sense of our virtue and perfection, namely, of the pure activity which forms the essence of our mind. But so far as our mind has its principle in God, as its essence and existence are a consequence of the divine nature and in constant dependence upon it, there is necessarily joined with the joy we have in our perfection in adequate knowledge the idea of God as the cause of this joy, and so there springs out of intuitive knowledge that frame of mind which Spinoza describes as the *intellectual love of God.* This love is quite different from ordinary love, since, as Spinoza expressly says, we do not represent God as present in it, or even wish to be loved by him in return; that would be seeking to take away his nature, to which all suffering and all change, and thus also such affections as love and hatred, joy and sorrow, are entirely foreign. The intellectual love of God in Spinoza's sense is the self-certainty of the knowing mind, which is conscious of its perfection as founded on God, and as such it is the highest blessedness, exalted above all the limits of time. But just because this consciousness the mind has of its perfection is only the effect, the expression, of the divine perfection, intellectual love to God is "a part of the infinite love with which God loves himself;" the act of the human spirit, which contemplates itself under the idea of God as its ground, is properly the act of God himself, contemplating himself under the idea of himself, but of God not according to his infiniteness, but according to that definite aspect of him which expresses itself through the medium of the human mind. But if God loves himself in man, he thereby also loves man in himself; and thus, though in the strict sense God feels neither love nor hatred towards any one, yet we may speak of a love of God to men, inasmuch as he

loves himself in them. "God's love to men, and the love of the mind to God, are one and the same thing." From this we see clearly wherein consists our salvation, or our blessedness, or freedom, namely, in persistent and eternal love to God, or in the love of God to men. As our slavery and wretchedness consist in the passions in which we are passive towards outward things, so the blessedness and rest of our spirit consist in the consciousness that we are free from these things by means of that perfect activity of our knowing mind which is one with the activity of the absolutely free cause, or of God himself. For the more a being is active, and the less it is passive, the more perfect is it, the more reality does it possess, the greater its share in the being of God.

In the *Treatise of God and Man and his Happiness*, Spinoza had described this intellectual love of God,[1] which appears in the *Ethics* as a contemplative condition of consciousness brought about by philosophical thought, rather as a mystic act of "union" with God, consisting in an immediate though not fully adequate knowing of the divine Being as the highest good, and in the heartfelt love to God thus brought about—thus rather as a practical affection of soul than as a mere intellectual contemplation. He also characterises it here as a true "second birth," because from this union with God in knowledge and love such new effects are produced in us, effects which must be as much greater and more splendid than those of our first birth as the incorporeal object of this knowledge is greater than the corporeal things of our natural perception. It is significant in connection with the philosophical development of Spinoza that in the *Ethics* these distinctly mystical and religious turns of thought have disappeared; his philosophy began with mystic speculation, but along with the stricter syllogistic form it also gradually assumed a more pronounced intellectual tone.

With the doctrine of the intellectual love of God is connected that of the eternity of the mind. On this point also there appears to me to be a notable difference between the older mode of statement in the *Treatise* and the more recent one contained in the *Ethics*. The

[1] *Treatise*, Book ii. chap. xxii.

former demonstrates as follows the immortality of the pious soul:[1]— If the soul be united to the body only, then when the latter perishes the former must also perish, since the body is the basis of the soul's love; but if the soul is united with God, the unchangeable being, it also must remain unchangeable and permanent. For by what should it be possible that it should be destroyed? Not by itself, for as little as it could of itself begin to be, when it did not yet exist, so little can it, now that it exists, by its own power change itself or pass away. This demonstration evidently points to the true immortality of the individual souls at least of the pious, who, in the love of God, are united to him, and thereby share his immortality. In the *Ethics* the matter has quite a different complexion; the discussion of this point is not quite transparent or free from doubt, yet Spinoza's opinion may with some probability be collected[2] in the following statement. As the human mind finds its objects of immediate perception in the actual affections of its body, it can only have ideas and memory during the continued existence of its body. But on the other hand, inasmuch as our mind as knowing is an eternal *modus* of thought, which is determined by other such *modi*, and with all together make up the eternal and infinite understanding of God, there must be in God an eternal idea of the essence of every mind, inasmuch as it is a part of the divine understanding, and therefore itself understanding, thought, and activity. From these two premises taken together it results that the human mind can neither quite continue to exist without the body, nor quite perish with it. With the body, the passive part of the mind, the imagination, will cease to be, but what is eternal in it will endure, the active part or the intellect, which constitutes the true essence of the mind, and as such must be found in God as an eternal idea of his understanding. As Spinoza expressly forbids us to confound this eternity of our mind as a modus of thought with the continuance of imagination and memory after the death of the body, we probably must not think here of personal immortality, which cannot take place without

[1] *Treatise*, Book ii. chap. xxviii.

[2] The passages to be considered are v. 21-23, 29-31, 38-40.

continuity of self-consciousness, or consequently without memory. In that case, however, the teaching of the *Ethics* is obviously different from that of the *Treatise*. In both works the continuance of the sensuous soul is denied, while that of the spiritual is affirmed; but the line of partition between the perishing and the permanent is drawn in the earlier work between the individual sensuous souls and those which have become spiritual, *i.e.* have been united with God by love, while in the later work it is drawn between that which forms in each soul the sensuous part, that which is passive and bound to the corporeal world, and that which forms the part that is spiritual, active, and free in God, or between the imagination, in which memory, self-consciousness, personal identity inhere, and the intellect, which is indeed the better part, but is nothing but the impersonal, the spiritual basis on which the imagination fills in the living lines of individual existence. And yet the remark is very peculiar which Spinoza adds, that for each man death is to be less feared in proportion as the force of his mind is great, his knowledge clear, his love of God perfect, because in that precise proportion that part of his spirit which remains untouched by death is greater than the part which in death passes away. For all that we have seen, it appears to be thought here that the surviving part possesses a separate subsistence, and even a consciousness of its own reality: yet I grant that this interpretation is not positively necessary; there is certainly something vague and undecided about these sentences.

In one point, however—and it is practically the main point in connection with the question of immortality—Spinoza never wavers; he unhesitatingly refuses to turn the belief in a future world, or in immortality, to account in any way whatever as a support of religion and morality. We may justly, he says in the *Treatise*, regard that as a great absurdity, which many who are held in estimation as great divines maintain, namely, that if the love of God were not followed by eternal life, they would do well to seek their satisfaction in sensual gratifications; as if they could discover something that is better than God; this is just as foolish as if a fish, which can have no life but in the water, were to say—If there is no eternal life for

me to follow this life in the water, I will leave the water and go to the land. What else could those say who do not know God? In the same ironical way does he treat in the *Ethics* those seekers for rewards, who regard piety and morality as burdens which they only consent to carry in consideration of the compensation of future happiness, and which they would at once cast off, to live to their lusts, if they knew that they had nothing to hope or fear from the other world. Against this Spinoza sets up the splendid and truly religious proposition: "Salvation is not the reward of virtue, but virtue itself, and we do not rejoice in it because we have previously subdued our lusts; on the contrary, it is because we rejoice in it that we are able to subdue our lusts." For salvation is just the love of God, and the love of God is knowledge, knowledge is activity, activity is power, and power is the removal of passivity; and so the spirit is the stronger for the subduing of the passions, the greater its activity, its knowledge, its love of God, its salvation.

In all this we have come to know what religion is to Spinoza esoterically, in its root and centre. And whatever verdict we may pass on his metaphysics, the nobility and purity of his religious disposition must be unconditionally recognised. This concluding idea of the *Ethics*, according to which the love of God is in itself salvation, and at the same time power for goodness, is genuinely Christian, and stands high above not merely the eudæmonism of the Illumination, but even the moralism of Kant, with whom virtue never gets beyond the struggle with inclination to reach perfect inward peace and blessedness, and hence can never quite shake off the eudæmonistic postulate, which Spinoza repudiates so energetically, of compensation and reward in another state of existence.

Looking back from the height attained by the philosophy of Spinoza in the idea of the intellectual love of God, to the propositions of the *Theologico-political Treatise* as to the nature and the object of religion, it appears as if the two positions were entirely different. There, religion was stated to be the practical worship of God, obedience to the divine commandments, and placed in strict opposi-

tion to all philosophical apprehension of truth. Here, it consists in the intellectual love of God, which is inseparably one with the philosophical knowledge of God and man. There, it is based on historical revelation and sacred writings; here, on an activity of apprehension which constitutes the true essence of the human spirit. There, finally, its object is to further good conduct and civil peace; here, its object is in itself, in that *acquiescentia* of the soul, which finds its salvation in the love of God. That these two ways of thinking are radically different is obvious. But did they lie side by side in the mind of the philosopher in plain inconsistency? Before assuming this to have been the case, we must first inquire whether the apparent contradiction may not be traced to the different points of view from which Spinoza regards religion in the one case and the other. Only after answering this question can we determine the further point whether he succeeded in reconciling these two points of view with each other in his own mind; and if this should seem not to have been the case, we shall yet be able to trace the reason of the contradiction; it will be seen that it is no mere thoughtless inconsistency, but is logically bound up in the ultimate principles of the system, which, indeed, is true of all the "contradictions" of this system.

In the first place, we must not forget that in the *Ethics* too (a fact of which the name of the work reminds us) the liberation of the mind from the slavery of the passions, a practical end, is the point around which all the philosophic thinking turns; the practical Good, which in the *Theologico-political Treatise* is spoken of as the opposite, the antithesis of the True, appears in the *Ethics* also as the highest, which the knowledge of the truth serves as a means. In addition to this we have to remember, that according to Spinoza the way to that ethical ultimate end has various stages, at each of which, in proportion as the capacity of knowledge varies, the practical task is also a different one. Or rather, the task itself is always the same: the subduing of the affections. And the general law also remains ever the same: affection is only to be overcome by affection. The question accordingly is merely this: Which are in each case the stronger affec-

tions, by which the lower impulses may be overcome? And the answer to this question differs in each case according to the stage of development attained. The highest and mightiest affection certainly in Spinoza's view is the intellectual love of God, or the joy of the spirit in the consciousness of its God-derived power and perfection; but he is also aware that the road to this exalted goal is an arduous one, and only to be found by very few. Are the many then who cannot reach this, the highest platform of all, to fall quite helpless under the slavery of the passions? Must there not be other roads for them, on which they may reach, if not autonomous freedom, yet some substitute for it, the control of the impulses in obedience to the laws of a higher will? Such roads there certainly are, and they are called positive religions, revealed religions, religions founded on authority.

Under this point of view does Spinoza regard revealed religion: his doctrine of the three stages of knowledge supplies an objective basis for such a view, and in the purpose spoken of in the *Theologico-political Treatise* it finds a subjective motive. Positive religion is a necessary educational substitute for the autonomous religion of reason; and regarded from this point of view his arguments appear to be at least logical. If positive religion serves to exercise a salutary influence on the feelings of men to whom the true knowledge is impossible, its doctrines must assume the form of imagination, not that of pure reason, because grounds of reason work much less powerfully on men's feeling than the pictures of a lively imagination. Then the authorities of positive religion must also, to answer to their part as educational agencies, be distinguished not only by moral goodness but also by lively imagination; and in proportion as they are this they will be less fitted for knowledge that is sober and according to reason: quite occupied with their subjective practical ends they cannot see things as they are in themselves according to the inner truth and regular order of them, but bring everything into arbitrary relations with their subjective ends, and so construct a world arranged in an imaginary way with a view to these ends, and having nothing in common with the actual world of cause and effect.

From this Spinoza concludes that the doctrines of the religious authorities are without any claim to theoretical truth in all questions of intellectual apprehension and knowledge: their value and weight is limited to the practical influence which they put forth on men's minds; with regard to dogmas the important point is not the *verum* but the *pium*. But as men differ in their notions and ways of thinking, and the same views may affect different individuals in different ways, and as again the same practical effects may be produced by a number of different views, it follows that religious doctrines cannot be binding on all, and that the moral purpose of positive religion is better served by toleration of different religious opinions than by compulsion in matters of faith. This was the thesis the *Treatise* was written to prove, and there is therefore no conflict between it and the *Ethics*.

But granting the formal consistency of the two, we must yet ask the question whether there is not a material difference between the intellectual love of God and the heteronomous religion of obedience, a dualism calling for solution, but incapable of solution from the premises of Spinoza. If it be the case, as Spinoza holds, that in the historical religions only imagination, only false opinion rules, how can they possibly be fitted to lead to a practically correct disposition and mode of action even to the limited extent to which he grants that they do so? If imagination or confused ideas are essentially connected, as he asserts, with man's passions and the slavery under which he labours, it is difficult to see how glad and constant obedience to the divine law or how goodness can be brought about in a sphere which is under their exclusive rule. If reason consists solely in pure philosophical knowledge, then the practical rule of reason, or the life according to reason, of true virtue and freedom, is limited to those who know, and all others are irrevocably bound under the dominion of unreason, that is of passion, unfreedom and immorality; there are no intermediate stages between pure unreason and the pure religion of reason, no relatively rational substitutes, no pædagogic approaches to the religion of reason. That he yet recognised such approaches is a concession to experience, which from the premises of

his system he had really no right to make. He has not between unreason and reason the notion which provides a bridge from the one to the other, that of relative, *inchoate reason*, and this want is connected with the fundamental defect of his philosophy, the absence of the notion of *development*, or of that becoming which possesses in its ultimate end also its efficient cause and its law. In the rejection of "final causes" there lies also a rejection of the notion of "development," or of the realisation of ends prefigured in the constitution of the thing; and the rejection of development makes it impossible to understand the historical life of mankind and historical religion in particular. Spinoza indeed allowed that this was so: he declares in a passage of the *Treatise*[1] that it is beyond the power of reason to show that, or how, men can be saved by mere obedience or knowledge of things: this must simply be accepted on the basis of revelation; *i.e.* conceded to positive religion as a historical fact of experience. Thus he allows the inadequacy of his "rational knowledge" to the understanding of historical religion, the morally wholesome and educative influence of which he has no wish to deny, and yet cannot comprehend. The same inadequacy of reason had to be confessed in respect to civil life, it being here also incomprehensible how purely selfish motives such as he presupposes could ever form the basis of a social life, which tends directly to the suppression of selfish unreasonableness by moral reason.

Thus, on the one side, we have to recognise that Spinoza rendered a great service. Drawing a clear distinction between purely theoretical knowledge of truth (philosophy) and the mode of representation pertaining to religion, which is determined by practical motives (theology), he was the first to vindicate the complete independence of philosophical thought in view of religious traditions. On the other side, his religious theory labours under a great limitation. He never transcended the contradiction; on one side he set up a religion of reason for those who know, a religion quite detached from history, consisting in the intellectual love of God, the power of which as a practical motive may well be thought problematical; while, on

[1] *Tract. Theol.-Polit.* chap. xv. p. 549.

the other side, he degraded historical religion to a mere product of irrational imagination, the practical value and force of which, though by him acknowledged, is quite incomprehensible in the absence from the religion of any elements of truth and reason. But this is only one more symptom of the dualism which pervades the whole system. In the metaphysics that dualism found expression in the merely external relation of the divine attributes of thought and extension and of their respective *modi*, the series of ideas and of bodies: it re-appeared in the psychology in the antithesis of body and mind, bodily affections and ideas, imagination and knowledge; and in the *Ethics* the negative relation of reason to the organic impulses and passions gave the system its quietistic and ascetic character. In the philosophy of religion finally the dualism announces itself in the contradiction, in no way explained or harmonised, between positive or popular religion, which while irrational is practically effective, and the religion of the philosopher, which while rational is so ideal and quietistic as to be unpractical.

Thus Spinoza set for the Philosophy of Religion the problem, the solution of which has been and still is the task of Philosophy. And even here we are in a position to see that the solution of this problem was only possible by such a correction of the metaphysical principles of Spinozism as to give the ideal factor the supremacy over the real, and the real an organic connection with the ideal. This the philosophy of Leibniz attempted to do, starting from the side of the real, and therefore on a dogmatic basis; this the critical philosophy of Kant, setting out from the side of the ideal, accomplished. Only then was the foundation laid which enabled the Philosophy of Religion to address itself with success to its positive task of understanding the real phenomena of historical religion from the ideal principle of mind.

CHAPTER II.

GOTTFRIED WILHELM LEIBNIZ.[1]

THE philosophy of religion of LEIBNIZ, as well as his metaphysics, with which it is closely interwoven, is the very opposite, in principle and in detail, of that of Spinoza. At the head of Spinoza's philosophy there stood the one substance, the infinite Being to which all particular beings were related only as vanishing *modi*. According to Leibniz there are as many substances as there are monads, *i.e.* particular unities, originally distinct, which are not modi of a universal being, but independent powers, causes of their own changes, living principles, souls. "Spinoza would be right," Leibniz says, "if there were no monads, for without them all would be transitory and would be reduced to mere modifications and accidents, because things would then have no ground of being and existence in themselves, no substantial basis, since this rests on the existence of the monads alone." He finds reality not in the universal but in the particular, in the simple beings which form the fundamental constituents of every composite entity, the elements of the world. But these simple beings are not with him dead material atoms, from which, as he often argues, life could never be explained, and specially not the ideas and the changes of them, which make up the whole contents of our own life. As these movements cannot be understood from any mechanical conjunctions and external movements of dead parts, they must be understood as the inner actions of simple unities, and the latter must be conceived as living and independent forces, as entelechies which

[1] Collected edition of his philosophical writings by Ed. Erdmann, Berlin, 1840, with an introductory *Prefatio*. I am not acquainted with any monograph on Leibniz's philosophy of religion. An account of his *Theology* has been published by Pichler, but contains little that is of service for our purpose.

have in themselves the source of their changes or inner activities. And this activity of the monads consists in ideas ("*perceptions*") and in the striving ("*appetition*") or tendency to change, of the ideas. Under the latter we have to understand not only the conscious ideas, which Leibniz expressly distinguishes as "*apperceptions*," but every such state, whether conscious or not, as embraces or represents a multiplicity in unity or in the simple substance. No monad is ever quite without ideas, because its life consists in these, and life is a constant connection, without gaps, of states each of which is the result of the past, and pregnant with the future. Even in the condition of profound and dreamless sleep, or of fainting, we have ideas, but they are so small and confused that they do not come into our consciousness. This is the lowest state of the monads in which those of the lowest order ("the naked, perfectly simple monads") always are: above these rises even the animal soul, which is capable of sensation and of memory; and still higher rises the rational soul, or the spirit of man. The more distinct the ideas of a monad are, the more active and perfect is it; the more indistinct they are, the more passive is it; the more limited its activity, the more imperfect its condition. In this passivity, this inner limit of its capacity for ideas, consists the materiality of the monad, which also belongs to its essence and adheres to every single monad, the corporeity of the monads which Leibniz calls the *materia prima*, the element on which depend their relations to each other and their adhesion to the whole. But even what is generally understood as matter, corporeity in space (*materia secunda*), is, according to Leibniz, not an actual reality, but only the appearance in which a heap of monads represents itself to our confused thinking, somewhat after the same manner as the milky way or a cloud of dust, which appear continuous to the undiscerning eye, while the eye which penetrates deeper sees in them a multitude of stars or of dust-grains.

In this way Leibniz made matter a mere moment or phenomenon of the idea-setting activity of the alone real intellectual substances or monads, and so rose not only above the materialism of the mechanical explanation of nature, but also above the dualism of Descartes,

who placed body and spirit over-against each other as the extended and the thinking substance, and of Spinoza, who had but one substance, and within it connected the attributes of extension and thought in a merely external way, and made the series of the *modi* of extension, or bodies, go on side by side with that of the *modi* of thought, or ideas (minds). Taking body and mind to be thus opposed to each other, their union in man appeared a riddle; a riddle which occasionalists thought could only be solved by supposing a continuous miracle at the hand of a *Deus ex machina*, who on every movement of the soul effected an answering movement of the body. Leibniz got rid of this problem (at least in its original anthropological form—in a wider form it came up again) by softening down the supposed opposition of soul and body to a merely relative difference of lower and higher states of the same spiritual substances. In the body he sees not only a machine set together of dead matter, and moved in a purely mechanical way, but an organism instinct with life throughout, and consisting even in its smallest parts of a combination of spontaneous forces of a spiritual nature; the whole material world is to him full everywhere of life, force, activity, soul. On the other hand, he did not identify mind with the actual self-consciousness; he finds in it also a side akin to nature, namely, in the dark unconscious life of the soul, in those small and confused ideas which do not rise to the daylight of consciousness, and yet make all the difference between one individual soul and another, since in their dark depths is pre-formed the basis of individuality, of genius, of character. As he thus sees in the body what is akin to mind, in the mind what is akin to nature, the difference between the two ceases to be hard and fast; the one melts into the other, providing him with a scale of gradation of innumerable stages of development without a gap anywhere. Even the small ideas which are not noticed serve to keep up the universal continuity of life in the world; for in them it becomes possible that in every monad every other monad and the whole universe should be represented, the representation in each monad being from some particular side, and exhibiting degrees of distinctness or darkness of this or of that feature.

But even if every monad stands in relation to all the others by

its ideas, the connection thus set up is only an ideal one; there is a correspondence of the independent idea-setting of each with all, but not a real action of one upon the other. Such an interaction Leibniz declares to be impossible, as each monad carries in itself the reason of its own changes, and all that happens in it is therefore nothing but the development of its own activity, while, on the other hand, it has no windows by which anything might come in or go out. But if there is no immediate connection between one monad and another, if each is a world to itself, all the changes in which come to pass as independently of all outside, as if there were nothing outside of it at all: how then is it possible that there should yet be agreement between one set of the phenomena of the monads and another, and that the states of the one should answer every moment to the ideas of the other? This agreement, Leibniz answers, can only be the operation of a common cause, which does not indeed, as the occasionalists think, regulate the one monad in accordance with the other, but which, once for all, from the beginning has constituted each monad in such a way with reference to all the others, that its course accurately corresponds to that of all the rest, without being directly influenced by them. The harmony of the monads is accordingly preconcerted by God, inasmuch as in his creative wisdom the idea of each was conditioned by that of all the rest, and each accordingly was fitted at the creation to observe agreement with the others.

This notion of "*pre-established harmony*" forms the conclusion of the doctrine of the monads, the head corner-stone of the metaphysical and the foundation-stone of the theological system of Leibniz; he bases upon it, not exclusively indeed, but with a decided preference, his proofs of the existence of God, which accordingly, to follow the logic of the system, we should now at once consider.

Leibniz is convinced that we have a more certain knowledge of God than of any other being except ourselves; he considers that the proofs of the existence of God possess a cogency equal to that of mathematical demonstrations, and he regards all the proofs formerly in use as good and serviceable, if they were only completed a little.[1]

[1] *Nouv. Essais*, iv. cp. 9. *Op. Phil.* Ed. Erdmann, p. 373, *sqq.*

The proof may be conducted either *a priori* or *a posteriori*. The *a priori* (ontological) argument by which Anselm and Descartes inferred from the notion of God as the most perfect being his existence as one of his perfections, he holds to be not a paralogism, but an imperfect demonstration requiring to be supplemented by the proof that the idea of the perfect being is possible and does not involve a contradiction; for supposing the possibility of the notion of God, there certainly follows from it—but this notion alone possesses this privilege—his actual existence. Leibniz did not give his reason for this assertion; and what he adduces as a proof of the possibility of the notion of God, viz., that nothing can stand in the way of the possibility of that which involves no limits and no negation, and consequently no contradiction, is obviously inadequate, as this is just the question, whether an unlimited Being can be thought along with the notion of reality (especially as Leibniz in his *Monadology* defines reality). He grants however that this proof does not possess the conclusiveness of a mathematical demonstration. Still less convincing does he consider the argument of Descartes from the existence of the idea of God in us to the existence of God as the source of that idea. For in the first place it would have to be proved that this idea is a logically possible one, since we may have many an idea which is not true (*e.g.* that of the *perpetuum mobile*), and to which there is no reality to correspond; and in the second place, this argument does not prove sufficiently that the idea of God, supposing that we have it, must come from its original. The idea of God is not born in us, in the way Descartes supposes, as a ready-made piece of knowledge, which is always present to consciousness; it is, like all other ideas, present in our mind as a thing possible to us, which we have to draw forth out of the depths of our faculty of knowledge and to make an object of positive knowledge. But while rejecting the Cartesian argument from the innate consciousness of God in the naïve form that argument had at first, in which no regard was paid to the psychological stages, he gives it a very suggestive turn by giving it a broader basis to start from: not only the idea of God, but all those ideas, the preparation for which is

innate to our mind in such a way that as our faculty of thought develops we must infallibly come upon them, and cannot possibly resolve them into anything else, those "eternal and necessary truths," whence are they? Is there something real in these eternal truths, and if not, how account for the necessary force they possess for our thought? This reality, Leibniz says,[1] must be based on something that does really exist, and therefore in the existence of the necessary being, whose essence includes reality. Only, he adds, we must not understand this as if the eternal truths were things arbitrarily fixed by God and depending on his will, as Descartes and others thought; in that case they would be accidental, not necessary truths; we must rather say that they depend on the mind of God and are the inner object of it. The mind of God is "the region of eternal truths," the sum of them and their source: hence these truths are independent of the will of God, and are for him also necessary laws, and laws to which his activity must conform. With this conclusion from the eternal truths as the necessary elements of our thought to their reality in the creative mind of God, Leibniz has already indicated that deeper turn of the ontological argument, in virtue of which it continues to assume decisive importance in the religious speculation of the present day.

Still more important and more inwoven with the spirit of his system is Leibniz's *a posteriori* proof from the existence of accidental things to their sufficient cause in a necessary substance, which as the basis of all things possible and actual must be absolutely perfect, *i.e.* must possess the sum of all positive reality without any bounds or limits, and therefore must be God.[2] He gives this cosmological argument a more definite turn, starting from man: every one knows that he is something really existing: everything that has a beginning must be produced by some other; empty nothing cannot produce a real being: therefore something must have existed from all eternity; but the eternal source of all beings must also be the source of all their powers; hence the eternal being must also be almighty. Further,

[1] *Op. Phil.* pp. 708, 510.

[2] *Monadology*, p. 36-41. *Op. Phil.* pp. 708, 506, 373, 376.

man finds in himself knowledge; there is therefore a being which knows; but it is impossible that a being without knowledge and ideas, a matter without sensation, for example, should produce a being with intelligence; hence the cause of things is intelligence, and there has been an intelligent being from all eternity. An eternal, most powerful, and most intelligent being is what we call God. At the same time Leibniz cannot conceal from himself that objections may be made to this argument (as they were made at a later time by Kant). Granted that if something—I, at least—is at present, something must always have existed, does this warrant the conclusion to an *eternal* Being, and to a *sole* Being as the cause of all others, and even an *intelligent* Being? Is it not conceivable that a matter capable of sensation should have produced all things? This objection leads Leibniz to prove that matter, in the ordinary sense, conceived as mass without life, could not produce out of itself a single motion, much less sensation, conception, thought; and that it does not bring us a step further to conceive of the mechanism of the atoms as ever so fine and minute, for that the smallest particles, however cunningly arranged, could never act otherwise than the great masses, namely, by motion in space, impact, and reaction. Supposing then that matter did produce from itself sensation, conception, and thought, this can never have been due to any mechanism whatever of its dead masses; we must necessarily presuppose that all these phenomena were a property of matter in all its parts, and inseparable from it from the first. But in that case matter would no longer be the simple bodily mass it is generally thought to be; it would be a conglomeration of an infinite number of soul-like beings, as in Leibniz's doctrine of monads it actually is. But again, if these many beings did not depend on one common highest cause, but were themselves the ultimate cause, they never could produce the order, harmony, and beauty which we behold in nature. This argument finds its completion in the theory of pre-established harmony, by which it is advanced not only to a moral certainty, but, as Leibniz believes, to a perfect metaphysical necessity. For since every individual of that infinite variety of minds expresses what takes place outside it

independently of the influences of the other beings, in a peculiar way derived entirely from the basis of its own nature, it is necessary that each of them should have received its nature from a common cause, on which all individual beings equally depend, and which brings it about that each of them lives in perfect understanding and correspondence with the rest, a result which could only be attained by infinite power and wisdom.

The nature of God Leibniz accordingly describes[1] as infinite power which is the source of all, perfectly wise intelligence containing the ideas, the possibilities, the eternal truths, and beneficent will which among all that is possible chooses the best. His power has being for its object, his wisdom or intelligence has truth, his will goodness. His mind is the source of essences, of the *what*, his will (which when active coincides with his power) is the source of existences, of the *that*, of the world. His attributes are just those which every monad has as a capacity of putting forth ideas and of striving; but in God these are absolutely infinite or perfect, while in the created monads they are limited and imperfect. And as, according to Leibniz, the limitation of the created monads consists in the obscurity and confusion of their ideas (*vid. sup.*, p. 70), the perfection of God consists, in his view, essentially in his perfect intelligence, or in his thinking all things, the possible and the actual, the past, the present, and the future, with perfect clearness. In virtue of this perfection he is not merely the efficient cause (source) of all things, but also their final cause, the prototype towards which all things strive as their highest aim; "the created monads imitate him so far as creatures can," while they all in advancing degrees of clearness of ideas "strive towards the whole," as it is thought with consummate clearness in God's mind, because he is the omnipresent centre, and all things are alike immediately present to him.

That God as absolute power and intelligence is both the efficient and the final cause of the world, is one of the most essential ideas of the system of Leibniz, since there depends on it the harmony of the monads in general, and in particular that between the body and

[1] *Op. Phil.* pp. 708, *sq.*, 710, 716, *sq.*, 469, 506.

mind of man, and it closes the chain of efficient and final causes, of the metaphysically necessary and the morally desirable, of the "kingdom of nature and the kingdom of grace." To explain away that idea out of the system, or to regard it as unessential, as a mere accommodation, is to alter the point and significance of the whole system. Much less clear and unambiguous, however, is the mode in which, according to Leibniz, we have to conceive of the relation of God to the monads and to the world. In a leading passage [1] we read that God is the primitive unity or original simple substance, the products of which are all created or derived monads; "they proceed, so to speak, by constant radiations of the Deity from moment to moment." In the same way, Leibniz says repeatedly, that the preservation of things is a perpetual creation, and takes place by a divine act which constantly produces the perfection of them; indeed he even uses the expression that all creaturely realities or perfections "emanate" [2] from God by a sort of continuous creation. The finite beings accordingly appear not to be created by an act of the divine will, but to be an outflow of the divine essence, a *modus* of the divine substance, which would be almost Spinozism. But against Spinozism Leibniz protests strongly and repeatedly; the power of God, he says, receives its due in this way of thinking, but not his wisdom, while the freedom of his action, on which moral adaptation rests, is made subject to a physical compulsion. Against this he states emphatically that God must be thought not as intra-mundane intelligence, *i.e.* as world-soul, but as extra-mundane, or better, supra-mundane intelligence, as world-architect and world-governor.[3] Here accordingly we are in presence of an antinomy in the system of Leibniz, which a historical treatment such as the present has only to state, not to explain.

It is in the following manner that Leibniz represents the creation, as an operation of the divine wisdom and goodness. The divine mind contains all possibilities, infinitely more than are realised in the world. All these possibilities strive, in proportion to

[1] *Monadology*, p. 47. (*Op. Phil.* p. 708.)
[2] *Ib.* pp. 191, 749, 615, 377, 148.
[3] *Ib.* pp. 749, 571.

the reality represented in them, after realisation; but they cannot all subsist together in one and the same world; though intrinsically possible, they are not possible together (*compossibilia*). Out of the competition of all these possibilities for realisation there arises in the divine mind, as the most perfect combination, that in which the greatest possible sum-total of reality is brought about; for, the more reality, the more perfection. The knowledge of the most perfect of all possible worlds impresses itself on the divine mind with the necessity of a mathematical calculation or of the mechanical result of a collision of forces: in so far there obtains, at the origin of things, a "divine mathematics" or "metaphysical mechanics" in the divine thought.[1] God, however, at the creation, does not act under physical necessity, but freely; for by the goodness of his will he brings to realisation the idea which his wisdom has recognised of the most perfect world, and so he acts on the principle of the best, or of goodness and wisdom, not on the principle of mere power, and he is thus both the final cause and the efficient cause of the world. Only this divine freedom must not (any more than human freedom) be understood, according to Leibniz, in an indeterministic sense, as if God might have willed differently and created something else than he actually did create. His will, on the contrary, is thoroughly determined by his reason, by the perfection of his wisdom, which, amidst all abstract possibilities, recognises only one as the most perfect, and therefore the only legitimate one *in concreto*. Now, if his will did not choose this best which he has recognised, to confer on it reality, this would be an imperfection or a "moral absurdity;" but such a thing is in logical contradiction to the notion of the most perfect being, and is accordingly, to adopt Leibniz's own terminology, a metaphysical impossibility. In fact, we only need to remember Leibniz's determinism, according to which the will is always and everywhere determined by the understanding (the idea-forming faculty), to see that in the case of a being of perfect understanding, which, without any deliberation or hesitation, or want of clearness, infallibly recognises from eternity what is right,

[1] *De rerum originatione. Op. Phil.* p. 148. *Theodicy*, pp. 506, 510.

we cannot properly speak of "choice" at all; the good having been infallibly known from eternity, the will is infallibly determined from eternity to will just this, and to act just as it does act. Accordingly we are undoubtedly entitled to declare that the distinction of "moral necessity" from metaphysical, on which Leibniz so carefully insists in order to the upholding of the freedom of God as against Spinozism, is inconsistent with the requirements of his system. The creation of the world and all that takes place in it, being merely the unfolding of the creative plan, is subject with Leibniz in no degree less than with Spinoza to the absolute determination of the eternal and unchangeable divine Being. Yet the difference certainly remains that with Leibniz the determining principle is the divine reason, the ideal teleological principle to which the actual power is subordinate as the executive organ, while with Spinoza the co-ordination of extension and thought and the rejection of the teleological principle gives the necessity of the causal nexus an abstractly realistic, *i.e.* naturalistic or fatalistic character, as Leibniz not unjustly objects. The essential difference accordingly between the cosmology of Leibniz and that of Spinoza is not to be sought in any weakening down by the former of the strict determination or law-abiding character of the world, but rather in his idealistic filling up of the realistic causalism of Spinoza by the introduction into the idea of the law-governed whole of a determination by reason, of the notion of final cause, and of development. In this I see the true philosophical kernel of the Leibnizian doctrine of the creation, to which the idea of the "choice of the best possible world" is related as the more popular, or it may be the exoteric, form of representation. Yet it certainly cannot be denied that this description of his idea led not only his followers, but also in part himself, to yield to the vulgar view of the world and the sentimental and irrational teleology which accompanies it, and to make concessions to it which cannot be altogether reconciled to the true spirit of his system, but indicate a declension to the more superficial popular philosophy. And it was only natural that in view of this popularised Leibnizianism profounder thinkers should go back to

Spinoza, to find in the inexorable strictness of his law-observing causalism the means to purify the teleological view of the world from unphilosophical degradation; in them, therefore, did the true spirit of the Leibnizian philosophy first cast off its popular disguise and begin to play its part as the most powerful leaven of scientific thought.

If the creation be the realisation of the best possible world, the question cannot be avoided how the great amount of evil existing in the world around us is to be explained. The question of the Theodicy, the justification of God in respect of the evils of the world, engaged Leibniz's attention from the first: he takes up the point even in the essay *De rerum originatione radicali* of the year 1697, and suggests there the same ideas as he afterwards worked out more fully in his most popular work, the *Theodicy* (1710). The problem was the more pressing for Leibniz as his philosophy did not allow him to content himself with the traditional dogmatic solution, which regarded all the evils of the world as punishment following upon human sin, and sin as the effect of the freedom of beings left to themselves, thus tracing the evils of the world to a chance not admitting of explanation. This view is obviously directly contradictory of his cardinal principle that nothing happens without a sufficient cause, a principle which could admit of no exception in its application without losing its force, since all our knowledge is based on it, and in particular our conviction of the existence of God. As for the hypothesis of an undetermined or indifferentist freedom of choice, Leibniz declares it no less distinctly than Spinoza to be an illusion. Man never finds himself in perfect equipoise; there is always a preponderating reason which determines his choice, and turns the inclination of the will towards one side or the other; a choice without any determining reason, proceeding out of pure indifference, would be nothing but chance; but such a thing is a chimera, and never occurs in Nature. Yet man's acts are free and not under compulsion, inasmuch as he stands under no external constraint, but gets his own will; yet certainly this will of his is always determined in one way or another, whether by conscious or unconscious motives, whether by reasonable motives or by passions;

when we come to will to do a thing we always go in the direction of the resultant of all the competing inclinations, and the ultimate reason of these lies in the disposition of our nature. The illusion of thinking ourselves free in the sense of being undetermined arises from the fact that the reasons which determine our decision are frequently such as we are not aware of; but the needle in the compass might as well think that it took up its position from its own free choice, because it is unconscious of the hidden force of magnetism.[1] This reminds us of the analogous illustration used by Spinoza of the movement of a stone thrown into the air, the stone supposing its motion to be free; but the notable difference may be observed that in the latter illustration the moving force is an external one, as the modi in Spinoza's causal nexus are determined from without, while in the case of the needle the moving impulse is an inner one, as the monads contain in themselves the causes of their changes. Thus, according to Leibniz, everything is foreordained in man as well as everywhere else; his soul is a sort of "spiritual automaton," every occurrence in which follows with necessity from the conditions once given. His freedom consists in this alone, that it is his own nature from which all his willing and his doing proceed, and his nature is independent of all that is outside it, independent even of the will of God, inasmuch as He also makes no change on the essence or the nature of things which present themselves to him as part-ideas in the total idea of a possible world, but as they are, in the state of pure possibility, calls them into being by his almighty fiat, together with all that is contained in the best of worlds so chosen. In this way does Leibniz solve the famous problem of the consistency of human freedom with the divine foreknowledge and predestination. Obviously, however, this theory shuts out every interference by God with a view to change in the world once existing; he saw it all from the beginning, just as it actually is, with the connection everything has with every other thing, and with all its imperfections too: he knew it according to his wisdom to be the best world, and chose it to give it reality; and how could he now change it without doubt being

[1] *Op. Phil.*, pp. 513, *seqq.*, 593, 263.

cast on his wisdom? It is not God's way of acting to form imperfect resolutions, in which only a part is taken into consideration, and not the whole. Since, then, everything has been arranged together from the beginning, the world is endowed by the creative determination of God, which has established it, with a kind of necessity, and nothing can be changed in it. Miracles and answers to prayer are not precisely excluded; they also are events which God foresaw and determined from the beginning along with the rest, they are part of the pre-arranged course of the whole, *i.e.* they are no longer purely supernatural divine acts of interference, they are only comparatively extraordinary phenomena of the organism of the world. We shall have occasion to recur to this point.

But cannot a world be conceived of, without evil and sin, that would be better than the actual one? To this Leibniz answers, first, that it is very questionable whether such a utopian world would be really better, and richer in life and in all kinds of good things than the present one. We must not forget, he says, that many a thing that appears to the superficial eye to be evil may be seen from another side to be a good or else a means to a good which could not be attained without it. Who would value health that had not once been ill? Who would choose always to feed on sweets and not wish for sour and bitter things for the sake of variety? What would a picture be without shade, or a harmony without dissonances to be resolved? Even the sin of Adam and of mankind is frequently spoken of in Scripture and by the Church Fathers as a means to the greater good of grace or redemption. It is characteristic of Leibniz's personal character, a trait of his thankful and cheerful disposition, that he reminds the pessimists that even in civil society the malcontent is not regarded as a good citizen, and that it is a still more grievous offence for a discontented citizen of the divine kingdom to see nothing but the dark side of life instead of lifting up his eyes with thankfulness for the great preponderance of good. Granted that experience tells us of unsolved discords in this life, such as the prosperity of the wicked, and the sufferings of the innocent, yet reason and religion bid us expect from another life the

solution of such problems. It is true that the objections from the other side are here redoubled: when we compare the few who are chosen with the multitudes who are passed over, it appears strange that even in the great future of eternity and under the high authority of a most merciful ruler evil should have the advantage over good. Yet, Leibniz holds, the case is not so bad even here: we may perhaps comfort ourselves with the hope that all will be made blessed at the end of all things (the *apocatastasis*); or even were it the case that the greater number of men was not to be saved, yet the comfort would always remain to us, that the other innumerable worlds may be inhabited by reasonable beings, with regard to whom nothing can prevent us from assuming that the majority of them are happy, so that in spite of the many who are damned there will yet be a large balance on the right side.

But such hypotheses and reasonings as these do not, of course, exhaust the question. The attempt to find a philosophical answer to it must go somewhat deeper. What, we must ask, in fact, is the origin of evil in the world? And how does it consist with a creation due to the divine wisdom and goodness? The ancients looked for the origin of evil in matter, which they conceived as uncreated and independent of God; but we trace everything that exists to God; where then, to us, is the origin of evil? Leibniz answers that it must be sought in the ideal (intelligible) nature of the creature, inasmuch as it belongs to the eternal truths which form the object of the divine mind, independently of his will. Leibniz further distinguishes evils of three kinds; metaphysical evil, consisting merely in imperfection, such as necessarily adheres to every creature; physical evil, consisting in suffering; and moral evil, consisting in wickedness. The two latter are not essentially (absolutely) necessary, but they are relatively necessary as ingredients of the best possible world; they could not, therefore, be avoided by God if he wished to realise, and morally he must have wished to realise, the best possible world. He therefore allows evil and wickedness as a *sine qua non* of good, with which, in the idea of the best world, they are inseparably connected. To illustrate this notion of God's "allowing" evil, Leibniz adopts

the distinction drawn by dogmatic theologians between the "antecedent" and the "consequent" will of God. According to the first God wills what is good as such, and aims simply at perfection; but the real event cannot answer perfectly to this ideal purpose, because it is conditioned by the eternal truths or the essentially necessary essence of things, which are independent of the will of God; and from the conflict of that ideal purpose with the various conditions of its realisation, there results, just as the diagonal in the parallelogram of forces, the best possible as the actual object of the "consequent" (realising will); in the latter, however, physical and moral evil are comprised as a moment of the whole, in virtue of the supreme necessity of the eternal truths. In so far, then, God wills evil, not according to his absolute (antecedent) will, but according to his relative (consequent) will; he permits it, not as an end in itself, but as an accessory accompaniment of the good which he could not otherwise realise. If we attend to the essence of these reflections, and disregard the popular mode of statement as to the choice and the predestination of God, of which we have already spoken, we reach a deep and pregnant thought which is, in fact, adapted to transcend both the irrational abstract idealism of popular teleology and its miracle-working omnipotence, on the one side, and, on the other, the abstract realism of the non-teleological causalism of Spinoza, and to support a view of the world in which justice is done not grudgingly but amply both to the ideal purposes and to the real necessities of things. Thus Leibniz has pointed out in his *Theodicy* (the significance of which is depreciated and forgotten only by those who cannot perceive such weighty ideas in a form so unpretending) the line which the thought of modern times is taking in its search for a solution of the most difficult problems of speculative and practical religion.

Leibniz, however, did not lose sight, for the purposes of his *Theodicy*, of the old traditional notion of the negativity of evil. That idea, which the Fathers adopted from Greek philosophy, and which formed part of the theology of the whole of the Middle Ages, might appear to be quite out of keeping with that line of his own thought,

of which we have just been speaking. It does away with the distinction, remarked above, between metaphysical and physical and moral evil, since it reduces the two latter as well as the former to the negative notion of want of perfection or reality, limitation or privation. If evil be regarded in this way, it cannot, of course, have its origin in God, because, being a negative thing, it cannot have a positive origin. To a certain extent we are warranted to say that creatures derive from God only their perfection, the reality they have; and their imperfection from themselves, since limitation belongs to the notion of the finite being, and various degrees of limitation to the manifoldness of the world. But this consideration does not suffice to solve the problem in a satisfactory manner, because it is based on a superficial notion of what evil is, a notion which does not apply to physical evil (pain), and still less to moral evil, as Schelling afterwards so well pointed out.

If then, the actual world be, in spite of all its evils, the best world, because the evils which the necessary nature of things renders inevitable are not merely balanced but far outweighed by the good that comes to realisation in it, the question arises where we have to look, according to Leibniz, for the good which constitutes the highest end of the world? Leibniz finds the highest end, to which the fundamental impulse of our nature points us, to be *happiness*. But true happiness consists, in his view, which is set forth in the charming essay "On Happiness" (*Op. Phil.* p. 671), in "that joy which a man can at all times make for himself if his disposition is well-constituted, namely, in a feeling of pleasure in himself, and in the powers of his soul, when he feels in himself a strong disposition and capacity for goodness and truth." Joy, according to his definition, is nothing but a "feeling of perfection," as grief is a feeling of imperfection. Perfection, however, consists in "power to work;" the greater the power, the higher and the freer is the being. Lasting joy or happiness, then, can only proceed from a continuous perfecting or developing of the power, freedom, harmony, order, and beauty of a man's own being. Now the peculiar power of man is his reason, by means of which he not only has confused ideas like the lower monads,

not only perceptions and association of these through memory, like the soul of the brute, but is also fitted to recognise the eternal truths, which form the essence and the law of things, and their first source, the divine reason. "Hence it follows that nothing serves more to happiness than the enlightenment of his understanding and the exercise of his will, to act at all times according to reason, and that such enlightenment is chiefly to be sought in the knowledge of those things which are able to advance our understanding always further, and to bring it to a higher light, since there arises out of it a continuous progress in wisdom and virtue, and consequently also in perfection and in joy, the fruits of which abide for the soul even after this life."

Just in the fact, that "the will is determined by reason to the best," consists in Leibniz's view the highest freedom, which is one with true felicity. The agreement of these sentiments with the morality of Spinoza no one can fail to see, yet there is a difference which should not be disregarded. The freedom in which Spinoza sees the end of morality is a merely subjective thing, the independence of man from all that is external to him, his contentment in himself and agreement in himself, which are founded on God. Spinoza places man at an exalted height, at which, in the consciousness of his unity with God, he forgets the world around him, feels himself transported above it. But in this he loosens the social bond which connects the individual with society; to the solitary height of his intellectual love of God the sorrows and joys of the earth cannot attain, nor the sympathetic affections of love to man. With Leibniz it is different. According to him it is of the essence of every monad to stand in relation with all the rest, and to be a living mirror of the universe: and if so, then the growth of intellectual development towards perfection cannot lead to the dissolution of this mutual relationship and social tie, but must rather lead to a clearer consciousness of it and a more willing adoption of it; so that the more reasonable a man is, the less can he find his happiness in selfish isolation, the more will he rejoice in the happiness of others as well as his own, *i.e. love* men. Love is an elevation of our own happiness

by taking part in that of others. The more love, then, the more happiness, the more perfection, the more life. Hence Leibniz gives us that fine saying, which we should in vain seek in Spinoza, "Our life is to be esteemed a true life just in so far as we do good in it."

Leibniz is, however, quite at one with Spinoza in holding that the moral perfection, the happiness, and the freedom of man cannot be dissevered from true *piety*. And this he defines just as Spinoza does, as *love* to God springing out of the knowledge of the divine perfection. He recognises the distinctive superiority of the Christian religion over that of the Jews and the heathen, in that it makes the Deity the object, not of our fear and awe, but of our love.[1] Religion thereby satisfies the innermost requirement of our nature, and gives us a foretaste of the future felicity. For nothing brings so great happiness as to love what is worthy to be loved. Love rejoices in the perfection of the beloved; but there is nothing more perfect than God; hence love to him is the natural consequence of contemplating his perfections; and this contemplation is easy to us because we possess the reflections of those perfections in ourselves. The perfections of God are those of our own souls, only that he has them without limits; he is an ocean of which we have received merely some drops; power, knowledge, kindness, of which we have somewhat, are entire in him; he is all order, Creator of universal harmony, and head-spring of all beauty, which is a ray of his light. In this way we love in God the prototype of ourselves, to which we are drawn by the striving after perfection which is natural to our souls, and it may be said that according to Leibniz man loves God in himself, as according to Spinoza God loves himself in man: according to the latter man in loving God gives up himself to let God alone work, while according to the former he finds himself perfected again in God. According to the latter the pious love of God is the self-sacrifice of the finite, according to the former the self-assertion of the divine in man; and are not these two things both true, and each of them the truer the more it is combined with the other?

Another point on which Leibniz and Spinoza are quite at one is

[1] *Theod.*, Preface. *Op. Phil.* p. 469.

the strong emphasis laid on theoretical knowledge as the essential condition, and on practical morality as the consequence, of the love of God. "True piety," Leibniz continues in the above-cited paassage, "consists in the love of God, but in an enlightened love, the warmth of which is not unaccompanied by light." We cannot love God if we do not know his perfection, or even if we make a distorted representation of him as of an arbitrary and despotic ruler, whom it is impossible to love and whom it would be wrong to imitate. The true knowledge of the perfection of God, on the contrary, embraces in itself the principles of true piety, of the love of God which issues in action. It plants in the heart delight in what is good, and while referring everything to God as the centre it changes the human into the divine. In doing one's duty, in obeying the voice of reason, in aiming at the general welfare, one fulfils the laws of the highest reason and advances the glory of God, which is not different from the good of all. Whether one meets with good fortune or with evil, one is content with what comes, for one is resigned to the will of God, and knows that what he wills is best. Want of success does not drive us to abandon this frame of mind, and the thanklessness of men does not cause us to slacken the practice of beneficence. Our love is humble and modest, and disposed to judge our own faults, but to excuse and palliate those of others, to seek our own perfection, and to do no man wrong. "There is no piety where there is no love, and without helpful beneficence there can be no true religion."

In these fine sayings we have the gist of Leibniz's personal belief. What, however, is his attitude towards positive ecclesiastical religion? In the first place, he has enough insight into human nature to be aware that "solid piety," being light and virtue, conviction and moral conduct, has never been what the great multitude chiefly cared for, and that this is not to be wondered at when we consider how easily human weakness is imposed upon by externals, and how little receptive it is for what is inward. The multitude, he says, has in spite of all this always identified piety with the externals of religion, which imitate the true piety of which we spoke, in two ways:

in *ceremonies* which have an appearance of being virtuous actions, and in *formulas of belief*, which represent a shadow of the truth, and approach more or less to the true light. Leibniz is far from condemning these formalities, he rather judges of their value by the same standard as we saw applied by Spinoza, and which we shall observe later in Lessing and in Kant; he considers all these formalities to be so far praiseworthy as they are fitted to express and to promote that which they imitate; he believes that religious ceremonies and church arrangements had no other object even in the intentions of the founders of religions and of orders than the pædagogic one of educating men to morality. With the formulas of belief it is the same: "they are tolerable if there is nothing in them that conflicts with the wholesome doctrine, even though they should not contain the whole of the truth of which they treat. But it too often happens that piety is stifled by forms, and the divine light darkened by the opinions of men." Thus, according to the view of Leibniz also, the point in regard to formulas of belief is not whether they contain the full theoretical truth, but whether they contain the "salutary truth," *i.e.* whether the impression they make on the mind is a practically healthy one. This obviously is very similar to the dictum of Spinoza, that with respect to dogmas the point is less the *verum* than the *pium*, correct knowledge is less important in this field than that men's minds should be guided to obedience and righteousness. At the same time we have to observe a noteworthy difference. While with Spinoza there is no positive relation whatever between the *verum* and the *pium*, theoretical truth and religious representation, and it remains quite unexplained how the latter can exercise a healthy influence, Leibniz allows that the formulas of belief approximate more or less to the pure light of truth, even though they do not possess the whole of it. Thus he sees in them at least relative truth, and explains so far why they are wholesome in their influence. The notion of relativity, approximation, development, which is so significant for the whole system of Leibniz, provides here the link, which with Spinoza is entirely wanting, between knowledge and faith, philosophy and theology. The true principle

was certainly indicated here, which was followed up in the subsequent philosophy of religion, from Lessing's *Education of the Human Race* onwards; yet we must acknowledge that in the attempts of Leibniz himself to mark out the relations in question there is a good deal of vacillation and indistinctness, a natural consequence of the thraldom of dogmatism which was not yet broken and was only to be overcome by the critical philosophy.

Leibniz sets himself to prove "*The Harmony of Faith and Reason*" in an essay which forms the introduction to the *Theodicy*. He was led to this attempt by a work of the sceptic Peter Bayle, in which he subjected the doctrines of the Church, especially those of sin and of election, to a sharp criticism, and sought to prove that faith and reason are radically opposed to each other, and that there is only a choice between blind faith (and for this he pretended to be pleading) and radical unbelief. Leibniz begins with remarking generally on this point of view, which appears to seek the "triumph of faith in a proof of its irrationality," that it sets God at strife with God, reason being a gift of God as well as faith. But the contemner of reason is also at variance with himself, for reason is itself the organ by which we must believe. Faith is a firm assent, and such an assent can only be properly given on the basis of good reasons for it. He who believes without a reasonable ground for believing may be in love with his own fancies, but he is not seeking for the truth nor obeying the divine Master, who wills that we should make use of the faculties which he has given us to preserve us from error. If such a one is in the right way, he is so by chance; if in the wrong way, it is his own fault, and he will have to answer for it. If faith were not founded on reason, how could we defend our preference for the Bible in comparison with the Koran, or the religious books of Brahmanism? How could all the great apologetic works on the truth of the Christian religion have been produced, but by reason? Even within Christianity every sect gladly makes use of reason in its doctrinal controversies, so far as it considers that reason can serve it; and it is only when rational considerations fail that the cry arises, "That is an article of faith which transcends reason!" Hence from the very fact that faith

is accustomed to uphold and defend its cause before the forum of reason, we conclude that it cannot be against reason. From this it follows of necessity that nothing can be a proper object of faith that stands in complete and irreconcilable conflict with reason. That an article of faith is unreasonable proves certainly that it is false, or that it does not really come from divine revelation, but from human imagination. The so-called "triumph" of such a faith as has been proved to be contrary to reason could only be compared with the triumphal fires that are kindled after a lost battle: it would either be a desperate irony or a deceitful comedy. And hence Leibniz says, in words still worthy to be laid to heart: "To despise reason in matters of religion is to my eyes either certain proof of an obstinacy that borders on fanaticism, or, what is still worse, of hypocrisy."

But there are some things which, though they seem to be contrary to reason, are not so in reality. We must, says Leibniz with the Schoolmen, distinguish between what transcends our limited human reason and what is repugnant to reason generally, to the divine reason, which is the inviolable chain of the eternal truths. Only the latter is in the full sense of the words contrary to reason, and therefore impossible; the former is merely above reason, and, notwithstanding that, is yet possible. Now it cannot be denied that there is a certain amount of justice in this distinction; in the first place, it contains a warning which is never out of place against light and precipitate denials in religious questions, against that impertinent criticism, which pronounces everything to be absurd the meaning of which is not written large upon its surface. It also contains a warning against pronouncing a scientific judgment prematurely in problems which are not yet ripe for decision, because the evidence is yet imperfect, the examples doubtful, etc. The justice of the distinction lies in short in its being an appeal from a reason which is still unreasonable, or insufficiently informed, to a more reasonable and better instructed reason; what is "above reason" in this sense is so only relatively, not absolutely; and if we take it in this way the notion would suit Leibniz's style of thought very well indeed. But

he was not content with this: he gave the notion of the "supra-reasonable" an extension which might be thought scarcely consistent with his philosophical premises. What he does is to connect the scholastic distinction of against reason and above reason with his own distinction of the metaphysically and the physically possible. Only the former, to which belong the truths of mathematics and logic, is to be regarded as absolutely necessary, so that a contradiction of it should be absolutely impossible. The physical laws again are to be regarded as only hypothetically necessary, because of the divine will which prescribed them to nature, and which can therefore determine to make exceptions from them. Such exceptions then are above our reason, which is tied to experience and its laws, but not against reason in general, and therefore not against the absolutely necessary (indispensable) truths of metaphysics. The distinguishing feature of that which is above reason is thus, that it can neither be proved by grounds of reason—then it would be reasonable, nor refuted on such grounds—then it would be irrational and impossible.

Of this nature, Leibniz held, are *miracles*, or occurrences in connection with which God releases created beings from the laws he has imposed on them, and causes them to produce something to which their own nature does not lead. They are possible, because they only contradict the laws of nature, which are not eternal but positive truths resting on God's free choice. This choice, indeed, was not a groundless one, but was determined by considerations of moral suitability (*convenance*); but for this very reason, because the physical necessity of the laws of nature is based on the moral necessity of the divine wisdom, it is also conditioned by the latter, and must therefore yield to moral considerations of a higher order. "The general reasons of goodness and order which influenced God (at the creation), may in certain cases be overcome by higher reasons of a higher order." Now it seems to me more than doubtful whether this theory is capable of being combined without contradiction with the Leibnizian doctrine of monads, or indeed even with the fundamental idea of the *Theodicy* of the unavoidableness of evil in the unalterable connection of the world. Leibniz, however, thought

he could combine them by supposing miracles to have been taken up into the divine plan of the world from the beginning, and allowed for all along in the plan of the mechanism of nature which is arranged with a view to the moral ends of the spiritual world. In fact he saw in the arrangement which always causes a miracle to appear at the fitting moment in the course of nature a further proof of the pre-established general harmony of the material and the spiritual world, of efficient and final causes, of the kingdom of nature and of grace, or of God as the world-architect, and God as the world-governor, the ruler in the kingdom of God of moral spirits. Yet, however we may admire the acuteness which Leibniz expends on this theory, we shall be doing him no injustice if we say that, in this instance, he descends from his philosophical platform, which maintains the complete unity of teleology and mechanism, of ideal ends and causal necessity, to that popular imaginative and irrational teleology, against which Spinoza dealt such doughty blows. At the same time we are led to think the obstinate one-sidedness of the latter somewhat more natural, to find more excuse for his rejection of all teleology, when we see the temptation of idealism to err in the opposite direction to be so great that even such a thinker as Leibniz could not altogether avoid it.

Leibniz, however, did not limit the sphere of that which is above reason to miracles alone, but included in it the greater part of dogma, *e.g.* the Trinity, the Incarnation, the Eucharist, the Resurrection, the eternal punishments of hell. All these doctrines he declared himself ready to prove as against the unbelievers to be free from contradictions, that is, to prove them to be not contrary to reason but possible; but he would not undertake to give a positive proof of the truth of mysteries, just because they do not spring from reason but from revelation. This is not to be taken as indicating any doubt of these dogmas, in which, on the contrary, Leibniz appears to have sincerely believed; the position answers exactly to the relation of thought to that which is "above reason" in the sense of the word above described; all that reason can furnish here is a proof of the possibility of such things, thus clearing a space for faith; it cannot

prove them, as they transcend the horizon of reason. This gap is filled by revelation, which Leibniz takes quite in the traditional sense, as supernatural communication of doctrines. He distinguishes the original revelation which consists in an impression made by God directly on the mind, and to which we can fix no limits, from the traditional, which comes to us in the ordinary mode of communication, making use of such ideas and words as it finds to its hand. Here, however, he expressly remarks, that no revelation, not even the immediate and original one, must stand in conflict with a clear perception of reason, since, if it did, we should have no means to assure ourselves of its truth, its truly divine origin, or its right meaning. Still more necessary is the confirmation of reason for those who receive the revelation only at second-hand, by oral and written tradition; here the trustworthiness of the source, *i.e.* specially the holy Scriptures, must first be tested before the tribunal of reason, and its credentials found correct, before reason can subject herself to it.[1] These are precisely the principles of what was called "supra-naturalism" at a later day. The history of theology teaches that if we start from these premises the supra-natural and supra-rational are more and more curtailed, and the mysteries of dogma opened to the speculative mind by the double key of the historical investigation of Scripture and the analysis of the religious consciousness. That before it was thus opened up the sphere of dogma belonged, even in the eyes of a thinker like Leibniz, to the realm of the supra-rational, will cause no surprise to him who has learned that even great geniuses never completely overleap the limits of the age they live in. But just because Leibniz's philosophical thinking did not embrace these matters, we ought not to draw into the sphere of his philosophy of religion, which alone here concerns us, his dogmatic and ecclesiastical views and endeavours.

[1] *Op. Phil.* p. 408, 488.

CHAPTER III.

CHRISTIAN WOLFF AND THE ILLUMINATION.

THE philosophy of Leibniz was systematised and popularised, it is well known, by CHRISTIAN WOLFF. But valuable and deserving as this work was, the popularised Leibniz had lost much of his definiteness; it was exoteric Leibnizianism which by Wolff's exertions became the ruling mode of thought in the Illumination of the eighteenth century, and we must not forget that here as always in similar circumstances the philosophical system was rather the reflection than the source of the spirit of the time. The age of the Illumination was in fact not competent to understand and adopt the philosophy of Leibniz, save in a form suited to its own style of thinking. The movement had sympathy, it is true, with the teleological principle of that philosophy, but it brought it down, as was unavoidable, to the level of its own practical and utilitarian understanding, and so made it a very different thing from what Leibniz himself had intended and created it to be. The teleology he meant was objective, inherent, and universal; everything has its end just in its own nature, and realises it by developing its own constitution. And the end of the world as a whole lies in nothing but the greatest possible sum of the perfection, or inner conformity to their ends, of all its parts. The age of the Illumination was simply incapable of thinking in a strain so objective, so universal, so apart from consideration of self: it was much too subjective, too anthropocentric, too naïvely egotistical to withdraw its eyes even for a moment when engaged in the contemplation of things from the manifold ends and needs of mankind, and so it appeared to it to be a matter of course that the adaptation of things

should consist simply in their being available for human purposes, in their usefulness. The wisdom of the Creator had no other end before it at the arrangement of the world but that things should thus be useful for us, for the satisfaction of all our "need, comfort, and delight." It is the part of philosophy and of science generally to judge of things as they are in themselves, according to the ground and law of their own being; but in the movement we are speaking of this position was quite deserted, and in place of it there came the view of practical life, which feels an interest in things only in so far as they are or may be useful or hurtful to ourselves. This distorted point of view, this exchange of the great philosophical principle of inlying purpose for the petty and vulgar principle of external usefulness is characteristic of the whole period of the Illumination with its practical understanding and naïve egotism, and cannot justly be charged to the account of any individual. The individual did no more than clothe in the form of learning an attitude which lay in the spirit of the time.

We can describe, even before seeing it, the religious view of the world which must arise from such a philosophical position. To this external teleology, which sees in all things nothing but means for purposes lying outside them, and not necessarily connected with them, the world is nothing but a total of fortuitous existences, the reason of which lies outside themselves in a creative will which has placed them together as means for ends arbitrarily chosen and not lying in the nature of the things themselves; the world accordingly is a work of art, a machine constructed by God at the beginning and still moving according to the law of its mechanism. And the eudæmonistic optimism which finds comfort in this constitution of the world is perfectly content with the regular revelation of God in the natural order of the world, and finds no reason to assume the necessity of an extraordinary historical revelation; and if such a revelation is not necessary then it is superfluous, and, according to the law of economy, it does not answer its purpose; it is therefore improbable if not impossible. When such a revelation is accepted as a fact on the authority of church tradition, reason of the subjective

kind we have here before us finds it impossible to live at peace with it. On the one hand, it wants the power to take up its position within the historical development of biblical religion, and understand that development in an objective living way, interpreting the phenomena of it in the light of their own age; and on the other, it cannot simply surrender itself to the tradition in unreserved submission to authority. Hence the numerous attempts to draw the boundary between revelation and reason, and to tie up the first with all sorts of conditions of possibility and criteria of reality, so that it shall give as little trouble as possible to the second. Such is, generally speaking, the religious position of the Illumination as represented by Wolff, a position which clearly has more to do with the history of civilisation and with Church history than with philosophy; so that our dealings with it may be brief.

It is significant with regard to the dogmatism of Wolff that he did not write a Philosophy of Religion, but a philosophical (he calls it a "natural") Doctrine of God; what interested him in religion was not the psychologico-historical phenomenon found in experience, but only its transcendent metaphysical object. The existence and attributes of God are the subject of his *Theologia naturalis*, which he expounds at fearful length in two volumes, one with 1120, the other with 722 paragraphs. The difference between "natural theology" and that which is revealed is explained in the Prolegomena. The former does not support itself, like the latter, on the authority of Scripture, but on experience and on nominal definitions, logical axioms, and the inferences drawn from them. It thus forms the introduction and scientific foundation of revealed theology, and serves as a philosophical proof of the truth of Scripture: but Scripture, on the other hand, is of great assistance to it, because in Scripture the philosopher finds the propositions of theology ready to his hand, and so has only to prove them, not to discover them, whereby his task is very greatly facilitated. This naïve observation betrays the whole dogmatism of this natural theology: it simply accepts the traditional religious ideas, which it regards as given, and then seeks to provide a formal demonstration of them by going to work syllogistically with

nominal definitions and axioms which contain *in nuce* what is to be proved. The method is the familiar one of scholastic theology, which Spinoza had made some steps to supersede, but which was completely displaced only by Kant.

The proof of the existence and the attributes of God is conducted in two ways: in the first part *a posteriori*, in the second *a priori*. The *a posteriori* (cosmological) argument according to Wolff may be briefly stated as follows:—We exist. This existence of ours must have a sufficient cause. This cause, to be sufficient, must not lie in a being which has the ground of its existence in another being. It must therefore be a necessary being, which needs no other being for its existence, but has the sufficient cause of its existence in itself, in whose essence or possibility, that is, the necessity of its existence is contained. Such an *ens a se* can have neither beginning nor end; it is therefore an eternal, original being. Such a being, moreover, cannot be composed nor extended, since otherwise it would be capable of coming into existence and passing out of it. The *ens a se* is consequently an *ens simplex*. But in that case it cannot be the world, which is composite, nor the original constituent parts of the world, which in a different world would be different, and so are not necessary but accidental; and as little can it be our soul, which also is of a piece with the world and shares its accidental character. The world, the elements, and our souls, therefore, are not the *ens a se*, but have their ground in the latter, *i.e.* in God. God, therefore, must not only exist, but must also have those predicates which he must have to be thought as the sufficient ground of the world and of souls. But the sufficient cause of the existence of this world and no other must lie simply in its distinctive superiority to other possible worlds. God, therefore, represented to himself all possible worlds and chose the present one in preference to the rest. This presupposes that intelligence and free will are to be attributed to God, therefore that he is mind, and perfect mind, to be conceived as free from the limitations of our minds. The perfection of the divine intelligence consists in this, that he has always a perfectly clear intuitive knowledge of all possible worlds and of himself, and that, on the contrary, confused

ideas, taking the term as including both sense-impressions and pictures of the imagination, are not found in him. And just because his knowing is not limited by sense, he cannot be the world-soul. His willing depends on his knowing, not only because it can only will that which is known as possible, but also because the most perfect known by him in each species calls forth his good pleasure ("delights him"), and so determines his will to the choice of it. The power of God extends to all that is possible, and therefore to many things besides what he actually wills. Miracles also, or occurrences above and contrary to nature, belong to the possible things which God, as the unlimited extramundane power, can do as often as he likes. At the same time the will of God is unchangeable, determined from eternity by his knowledge which is always actual; as he knows all at once, he wills all at once, with a single act of will. The defects of this whole line of argument are too obvious to need to be pointed out. The scholastic diffuseness and pedantic exactness of the demonstration in point of form do not conceal the serious gaps, illicit processes, and contradictions with which it abounds; and the same is true of what follows.

In the second part we have the *a priori* (ontological) demonstration of the existence and the attributes of God, from the notion of the most perfect Being. Under this term we are to understand a being comprising all compossible realities in the very highest degree; in whom, accordingly, there is no limit, nor imperfection, nor change. Now since that which is without limit and defect can contain no contradiction, the most perfect being, or God, is possible. But necessary existence is a reality of the highest degree (higher than merely fortuitous existence), and must therefore be reckoned as one of the compossible realities of the most perfect being which is posited as possible; accordingly this being, or God, is to be thought to have necessary existence, or existence belongs to his essence, he is the *ens a se*. Here this argument gets to some extent into the track of the *a posteriori* one; the latter sought to show that the necessary being which was there postulated was not to be found in the world, nor in its elements, nor in men's souls;

here it is shown that God or the existing most perfect being is not to be identified with the world and its various beings, nor yet with nature or the universal motive power in things, because this is not a reality but a phenomenon. Rather must his predicates be drawn from the analogy of our soul, which is also a simple being and contains compossible realities; these must be attributed to God in the highest degree. Accordingly what is present in us as a mere capability, or as a power partly active, partly quiescent or passive, must be taken to be in God, the limitless and passionless one, in an eminent degree, as a power that is always active, or as a pure and unchangeable activity. The divine will and intellect are then discoursed on with frequent and literal repetitions of the arguments of the first part: pains being taken throughout to give representations of God which shall be as pure and lofty as possible; but it may well be asked whether these representations agree with each other or with what has been formerly assumed. Are the notions of an activity eternally free from change, or of an infinite will, really thinkable? or can we speak, in connection with a perfect Being free from defects, of "willing" in the case of striving, or, in connection with a Being free from passivity, of the sensation of "pleasure"? Difficult questions of this kind had been suggested even by Spinoza; but they here receive no serious examination. God's likeness to man is too firmly rooted a principle of the Wolffian dogmatism to allow such difficulties as to first principles to give any trouble.

On the relation of God to the world, Wolff works out in a broad popular way the exoterical Leibnizian idea of the *choice of the best world.* Of all possible worlds God chose the present one as the most perfect, and as best answering his purpose, viz., the manifestation of his perfection or glory. This, the ultimate end, God made all particular ends, subordinate or super-ordinate to each other, subserve as means. In the whole of this most perfect world evil and wickedness are a part as an inevitable element of it, and God, in his wisdom, which sees what is best, determined to allow these evils. Thus they are not willed by God as ends, but are so interwoven with the ends which God wills that the latter could not be attained

without them. To desire to take away evil from this world is therefore to insult the divine wisdom which chose this world *with* its evil as the best. But if evil is interwoven with the well-calculated order of the world, then it serves itself as a means towards the attainment of good ends, and finally of the highest divine end.

Creation is described by Wolff, quite in accordance with church dogmatics, as a bringing forth out of nothing by a free miraculous act of God in time, which was at first followed by a miraculous condition of the world, which however (and this is certainly the most wonderful circumstance of all) proved the foundation of the regular order of nature. All the souls of men were created at once at the first creation, and they then pre-exist in a state of germ in the organic particles of seminal matter till actuality is given them in each instance at the time of conception. But how the beginning of the creation is to be reconciled with the proposition mentioned above, that God's willing and doing are a single eternal and unchangeable act, Wolff never attempts to explain, any more than he explains the contradiction that exists between the assertion of the possibility of super- or un-natural miracles and the propositions that the order and course of nature remains the same as long as the world lasts, that nature is compelled to observe the laws prescribed to her by God, that God creates nothing further within the world now existing, and destroys nothing that has once been created, that the forces of nature are never relaxed as long as the world subsists, and therefore need no further divine activity to come to their aid.

Yet what Wolff teaches about supernatural *revelation* amounts exactly to such an act of subsequent aid on God's part. Wolff begins with saying that an immediate revelation, in which God communicates ideas to the human soul, is only possible by means of a miracle, whether a psychological or a physical one. But as God can do what he will, and can also work such miracles as he pleases, there is nothing to prevent the possibility of immediate miraculous revelation. Only, that we may distinguish the true revelation from the false, we must attend carefully to the *criteria* of it. The first of these Wolff holds to be the necessity of a supernatural revelation ;

it must contain things which it is essential for man to know, and which he could not learn in another (a natural) way. For as miracle, however possible to omniscience, must yet always be a great disturbance of the regular course of events, God can only be moved to this extraordinary act of power by very strong reasons. So that where the contents of a revelation are such as it is not necessary that men should know, or where this knowledge might be brought about more simply in a natural way, there the miracle accompanying the revelation would be a luxury not in keeping with the divine economy, in which nothing must occur that is superfluous. Then it is asked: Of what nature must be the contents and the form of a true divine revelation? First of all, it must be worthy of God, and not in conflict with his attributes (which must thus be known to man beforehand apart from the revelation). It must contain no inner contradictions, which always rest on confusions of ideas such as God cannot have. Moreover, it must not be in conflict with the principles of reason, *i.e.* necessary truths, nor with the assured facts of experience; for what is in conflict with the actual, or with necessity, is simply impossible, and, as God is free from error, cannot be the subject of divine revelation. But while on this showing revelation cannot be against reason, it may yet, as Wolff holds with Leibniz, be above reason, or may contain such things as, if not contrary to the principles of reason, yet cannot be proved or explained from these principles. These are the secrets of revelation, or mysteries, which, just because they cannot be known from principles of reason, that is, in a natural way, find their proper place in revelation. They are not in conflict with necessary truths, but at most with accidental truths, such as the laws of nature, the validity of which is no more than conditional, and which therefore admit of the exceptions of miracles. For example, the truth that no virgin conceives without a man, is valid only for the ordinary course of nature, and does not therefore take away the possibility of the miraculous conception of Christ. As for the form of the revelation, the question is discussed in detail, in what case a dream or a vision is to be regarded as brought about in the course of nature, and in what case by super-

natural means. Nor is the possibility to be left out of consideration that a phenomenon may call partly for a natural and partly for a supernatural explanation; such a combination being quite in keeping with the object of miracle, which is to supplement the incapacity of nature to realise a divine end. The words, again, which the revelation employs must be chosen in such a way as to let the hearer apprehend without any doubt the meaning of God who speaks to him; there must not be more of them nor fewer of them that are necessary for intelligibility; the words must be used exactly in the traditional sense which is familiar to the hearer; and finally the style of the revelation must conform to the general rules of grammar as well as those of rational rhetoric, as it would neither answer the purpose nor be worthy of God, to make use of an incorrect mode of speaking!

Thus, though Wolff did not intend to question the occurrence of revelation, nor to cast doubt upon it, yet, as a matter of fact, he made it impossible to allow that such a thing had taken place. He made it depend on conditions which are nowhere fulfilled in the sacred history, and which could never be fulfilled. There was but a step from this position to the utter denial of all supernatural revelation as up to this time understood. And it was necessary that this step should be taken, if the notion of revelation which had hitherto prevailed was to be fairly reckoned with and got rid of. Only by getting rid of that false, because external and mechanical notion, could the field be cleared for a new and a deeper and more fruitful way of thinking, in which the "either divine or human" of Deism should be changed into "both divine and human."

The Deist REIMARUS is entitled to the credit of having taken this historically necessary step, the step from a rationalism which wanted clearness, and went only half way, to a rationalism that was thoroughgoing and radical, and of having thus indirectly occasioned a new and deeper movement of philosophical thought on religion (Lessing). D. Fr. Strauss recognised in this man, and certainly not without justice, a nature akin to his own both in light and shade, and erected a monument to him in the work: *Hermann Samuel Reimarus und seine Schutzschrift für die vernünftigen Verehrer Gottes* (1862), from

which we may gather a clear idea of the important services he rendered to his age as well as of the limitations he shared with it.

Leibniz and Wolff had treated reason as the natural revelation of God, had placed it side by side with positive historical revelation, and had maintained with more zeal than success the complete accord of the two. Reimarus agreed with Leibniz's opponent, Bayle, that reason and revelation plainly contradict each other; but while Bayle with treacherous humility had subjected reason to the authority of revelation, Reimarus believed the religion of reason to be the only true one and the only one capable of bringing to the human race permanent improvement and happiness. To secure an entrance for it he desired to expose the "delusions of the so-called revealed religion," and wrote with this view a work bearing the curious title: *A Defence of the Reasonable Worshippers of God.* This work consists of a criticism of the biblical tradition, which in incisiveness and onesidedness far surpasses all similar writings, those of the English Deists not excepted. He sets out with observing that in positive religions the faith of each man in the truth of his religion is based on the traditions of his fathers, therefore on the accident of his birth, since, if he had been born of parents belonging to another faith, he would believe another religion to be true. "Now a reasonable man ought not to base his belief and salvation on such an accident as that our fathers believed this or that; and there is nothing left for us but to examine the religion of our fathers, since it may happen to be false as well as another, with reason and without prejudice." True, such an enterprise demands, in view of the prejudices of birth and education, and the feelings of religious fear and hope which have grown up along with these, an amount of earnestness and of exertion which are not at every one's command.

Positive religion being founded on revelation, Reimarus insists, as Leibniz and the English Deist Toland had done, on the essential difference between faith in an immediate revelation experienced in a man's own person, and faith in a revelation which is only handed on to us, our knowledge of which is due entirely to the assurances of others. What we have before us in the latter case is merely human

testimony of a divine revelation which those who call themselves the messengers of it assert that they have had; and this testimony must be examined according to all the rules which are usually applied in judging of the truth of human testimony: on the one hand, we must inquire as to the credibility of the witnesses, in respect of their moral character as well as in other respects; on the other, we must consider the matter of their testimony in respect of its logical and ethical possibility. "The doctrines and precepts of true messengers of God must be such as are worthy of God and such as tend to the greater perfection and happiness of men. Such things as are self-contradictory or in conflict with other manifest truths, especially the divine perfections or the laws of nature, cannot be a divine revelation. No miracle can bring together things that are contradictory, and vices cannot be miraculously transformed into virtues." And for this reason, if for no other, doctrines which are doubtful or irrational can never be made credible by miracles, because all we can know of the latter is drawn from foreign testimony of a very doubtful nature. "Why should we make such shaky facts the foundation of the whole of religion, matters which are so subject to the influence of invention, of credulity, of deceit, of superstition?" The criteria applied here are substantially the same as those which Wolff had brought forward as canons to be applied to anything claiming to be a revelation; but in respect of miracles Reimarus differs from Wolff in holding what is opposed to the laws of nature to be impossible. But this was a legitimate inference from the metaphysics of Wolff, though one which he had sought to evade by the untenable fiction of the "accidental" character of the laws of nature and of the world's order. And Wolff, moreover, had set up the principle, that any alleged revelations of which it is possible to trace the natural origin are not to be considered the work of supernatural agencies.[1] Reimarus turned this principle to account in his criticism of the biblical narrative, and sought to prove that the alleged supernatural revelations and miraculous stories admit of a natural interpretation, and that their claim to a divine origin is therefore unworthy of credence, therefore a

[1] *Theol. Nat.*, i. par. 468.

false pretence, a deceit. That his critical procedure was glaringly onesided, and the results obtained by it erroneous, is at this day universally acknowledged; but it may be well to make it clear what was the reason of his mistakes. Without doing so experience teaches that it is but too easy to reject what is true as well as what is mistaken in such a position, and in so doing to sacrifice the results purchased by the thought of the last century.

The error of Reimarus did not lie in his determination to apply to the biblical narrative the principles of reasonable inquiry. This was his right: a right which man can not and must not permanently depart from if he is to be true to his nature as a reasonable being. His error rather consisted in the very defective notion he had of the principles of rational criticism, from which it followed that his method was not genuinely or consistently critical, but the strangest mixture of criticism and the absence of criticism, of unproved presuppositions and arbitrary hypotheses, in which an enlightened reason of a naïvely subjective character ran wild without discipline or limit. Where the biblical sources report supernatural occurrences, Reimarus's plan was to eliminate the supernatural element from them, and to regard the remaining part which he retained as actual history, merely explaining it after his own fashion on natural principles, so that chance and error, preconcerted arrangement and conscious deception, formed the chief factors of it. He never thinks of inquiring what entitles him to deal with a narrative the principal feature of which, the miracle, is incredible, as if it yet contained a historical fact; it does not occur to him that the whole story may be a legend which, though not founded on a historical basis at all, yet need not be arbitrarily invented and made up to serve the purposes of certain individuals. To the world of legend, of myth, of national and religious epos, the cold, unfanciful common sense of the Illumination was singularly blind. Least of all did it occur to Reimarus that in matters of historical criticism the very first thing to be done is to examine the sources, and to determine their age, their origin, their character and value, and that this must be done before any judgment can be formed on the stories they contain. The Halle theologian

Semler first drew attention to this point, and so rescued biblical criticism from the unregulated caprice of a Reimarus, and restored it to the path of regular methodical investigation.

In addition to this formal error in his critical method, or rather absence of method, the material error of Reimarus lay in that dogmatic Deism which he shared with Wolff and with the popular philosophy of his day, and which admitted only two alternatives with regard to the biblical narrative. The persons, doctrines, and occurrences of that narrative were either purely divine, directly divine messages and acts of power, or they were purely human assertions and inventions. In the former case all was true and perfect down to the very letter, in the latter the greater part was made up of lies from the first. This wooden dogmatism had not a glimmer of the notion of relativity, which makes things which, abstractly considered, contradict each other appear as co-related sides of the same thing and belonging to each other; nor of the notion of development, which shows in becoming the union of being and not being. In a word, this cast-iron Deism had no conception of such a divine revelation as does not come to man ready-made from without, but is brought about *within* him, in the development of his religious nature, and for this reason has at each point a divine side and a human side; and while it is nowhere without truth, is nowhere the pure truth or the whole truth. This idea—the pivot of all modern philosophy of religion—was indicated by Lessing in his *Education of the Human Race*, and matured by the critical philosophy as the ripest fruit of the Kantian critical method.

The want of historical feeling, the incapacity to leave out of sight one's own views, and to transport oneself into the spirit of other times, peoples, and religions, are felt in the most harsh and striking way in Reimarus's *Defence of the Reasonable Worshippers of God*, but these mistakes are by no means peculiar to him. The whole line of thought of the eighteenth century exhibits these traits; they form the limit of the illumination it attained, and are the obverse side of that self-conscious and self-confident intellectual clearness in which its strength lay. Its intellect was of that disjunctive logical order

which everywhere sees an either . . . or, light or darkness, truth or error; and which, being convinced that in its clear and distinct notions it possesses the truth itself, takes it for granted that whatever does not fit into these notions must be perverted and false. Dazzled by its own light, this subjective understanding is also blind to the rich world of the objective spirit, *i.e.* to history; it fails to see in the rich and changing pictures of many-sided individual life with which history is full the rightness of each thing in its place; it discovers no natural progress from the lower to the higher, no law of development, no immanent reason. It fails in this way because it does not know spirit as that which is subject to natural conditions, which assumes a special aspect in the individual, and develops itself from the natural disposition in each case, but thinks of spirit as opposite to nature, and as simple and uniform and always the same, as the mathematical understanding, the formulas of which are always and everywhere the same, always alike, uniform, everywhere equally empty. And of all the phenomena of history this levelling intellectual illumination could least of all do justice to religion, the most lively manifestations of which spring not from the reason but from the heart, and clothe themselves not in clear-cut notions but in imaginative pictures and mysterious symbols. Hence the Illumination was as exclusive and intolerant in its own way to positive religion in its various ecclesiastical forms, as orthodoxy is wont to be to the heterodox, only that the intolerance of the Illumination rather pitied its opponents as mistaken slaves of superstition, than hated them as godless unbelievers. And it made no great difference whether one rejected the positive religion of the Christian Church plainly and directly, to put the pure religion of reason in its place, as Reimarus did, or whether, with the majority of the illuminated, one conceded to positive religion a nominal authority, but divested it of all that was peculiar to it to such an extent that what remained amounted to no more than the shadowy "religion of reason" of Deism. In the belief of the Illumination in God, providence, and immortality, not only Catholic and Protestant, but even Christian and Jew could feel themselves at one. It is a significant fact that the man who did

most to popularise the Leibniz-Wolffian arguments for the existence of God and immortality, and in whose eloquent work the Illumination recognised the most adequate expression of its convictions, was the Jewish philosopher, Moses Mendelssohn.

Thus the German Illumination, starting from the rationalism of Leibniz and Wolff, had reached the same religious position as the English Deists or "freethinkers" (the name they gave themselves) had arrived at in the middle of the seventeenth century, starting from the empiricism of Bacon and Locke. It was very natural that the two streams, sprung indeed from different sources, but flowing in the same direction, should in many ways resemble each other. And here it may not be out of place to take a view, with the object of comparison, of this ally and parallel of the German Illumination.

CHAPTER IV.

ENGLISH DEISM.[1]

THE first of the English Deists is held to have been HERBERT OF CHERBURY. He was a practical man of the world, and in his numerous journeys he had come to be acquainted with the religious parties of all the churches; and their strife and contradiction had awakened in him the question, What is truth? Where is there any certain guarantee of a truth universally valid? The answer to this question he sought to give in his work, *De veritate, prout distinguitur a revelatione, a verisimili, a possibili et a falso* (1624). He finds the principles of knowledge in "innate common notions," which, being the presupposition and condition of experience, cannot be its offspring. The distinguishing quality of these notions he holds to be the universal agreement which makes them valid with all men. On these morals and religion are based. The latter is essential to man, it is the feature which distinguishes him as man, hence it is common to all men: there are no atheists save in appearance, those who are called so only reject the current conceptions of God. A man who really was an atheist would deny human reason itself. The end of religion is to bind men to goodness, and to keep them at peace with one another. If so many religious traditions do not answer this end, the false accretions are to be blamed for this which men have added to the genuine kernel of religion. To find this kernel we have only to seek out the common notions on which all religions are agreed.

[1] Lechler, *Geschichte des englischen Deismus;* Stuttgart, 1841. E. Pfleiderer, *Empirismus und Skepsis in D. Humes Philosophie als abschliessender Zersetzung der englischen Erkenntnisslehre, Moral und Religionswissenschaft;* Berlin, 1874.

Herbert considered himself to have found it in the five "truly catholic truths:" that there is a God, that it is man's duty to worship him, that the main part of the worship of God consists in virtue and piety, that repentance and amendment for what we have done amiss also form part of it; and finally, that there is a retribution, rewards and punishments, in this world and the world beyond. Herbert nowhere gave or even attempted a deduction of these truths; he bases them quite empirically on "universal agreement," which also is simply taken for granted, by no means proved, and, indeed, would not admit of proof.

If this be the kernel of religion, we are met by the question, how its appearance, as we see it in history, is to be explained. This question is treated by Herbert in his book, *De Religione Gentilium; errorumque apud eos causis* (1645). The origin of religion, he here explains, is to be sought in a double revelation; an inner and an outer one. The former consists in this, that God has implanted in the hearts of all the longing after an eternal life and a more blessed state of existence; and that he has thus "silently pointed out" himself, the blessed and eternal One. The latter consists in his revelation of himself in the great work of the world, in which nothing but blindness of mind can fail to recognise a work of the highest reason. Now the heavenly bodies set forth, more than all the other things in the world, the likeness of the eternal and blessed life of the Deity, and of the heavenly bodies the sun does this more than the rest, and therefore the ancients worshipped God under the likeness of these, the loftiest representations of him; and we must not consider that they counted the objects of sense to be themselves divine, but only the image, the body, of Deity. "In the corporeal nature of the heavens they worshipped its soul, in the soul of the heavens God himself." In this, its earliest period, religion, Herbert considers, was still pure and uncorrupted; it was a moral worship of God in the sense of the five principles of universal religion mentioned above, and the worship of images, too, was nothing more than an innocent symbolism. But here entered the perversion of the pure religion as it was at first: the priests introduced in their own

selfish interests all kinds of ceremonies and doctrines by which the true kernel of religion was ere long completely obscured. For the priests gave out that God, as the highest Lord, was to be worshipped by certain services, and that high honour must be paid to them also as God's special servants; and while they thus persuaded the people to perform superstitious acts of worship, they also introduced, by the superstitious fables which they circulated, all sorts of subordinate deities. In carrying out and consolidating these false doctrines, the priests had for their allies the greater number of the philosophers and poets; yet among the latter there were always some individuals who recognised the truth in its purity, and placed it above the statutes of the priests. The history of heathenism thus exhibits a process of growing corruption of a true and pure primitive religion; but Herbert was convinced that this course of events had repeated itself in Christianity as well. The victory of Christianity over the other religions was due to its having been at first free from the priestly accretions which weighed on these, it having brought to the light again from their disfigurement in the earlier religions the five central truths of religion. But the same process of degeneration soon began here also; the priesthood introduced all sorts of articles of faith, rites, and institutions, by which the moral influence of the religion was impaired.

This theory prefigures the whole style of thought both of the English and of the German Illumination. It is not destitute of able and noteworthy suggestions for the rational explanation of religion from the nature of man, his practical needs and the world of poetry and symbol before his mind; but these suggestions are not properly worked out, and, indeed, it was impossible to work them out when the monstrous position was taken for granted that the primary religion must be identical with the universal, the pure religion of reason, or that the reason of the Illumination had resided in the first men. From this it followed that whatever in the history of religion did not correspond to this reason must be the result of conscious invention and wilful deception! This is the most telling proof of the incompetence of the Illumination, of which we

have already spoken, to look away from the cut-and-dried intellectual notions with which it had provided itself, or to transport itself into the movement of history. It could not think of reason as a thing that had a growth, nor do justice to the various stages of its development and the various individual forms it had assumed.

In the empiricism of Herbert there was an element of idealism, but that of THOMAS HOBBES was full-blown naturalism, while at the same time, and this is the remarkable feature of this diplomatic philosopher, he found it possible, starting from radical premises, to reach very conservative conclusions on church and state.[1] As, according to Hobbes, all our knowledge is derived from sensation, so also our moral and religious views have their root in sensuous and selfish impulses and affections. It was fear of enemies that led the first men to renounce the state of nature in which all were at war with all, and to transfer to an individual their natural rights which were in their essence unlimited. With this individual alone it lies thenceforward to determine what is to be regarded as right and wrong, as virtue and vice. Such is the origin of civil society. In the same way it was at first the fear of invisible hostile powers, on whom the good and ill of life apparently depended, that led to the belief in and the worship of divine beings, who, according to the analogy of visions, were at first represented as spirits without bodies. Hobbes does not indeed cast doubt on the existence of a God as the originator of the world; but he believes that we can know nothing whatever about him, as revelation is itself incapable of proof, and is only received on authority. Thus ignorance and fear, engendering together a dim sense of dependence, are, with Hobbes, the psychological roots of religion. But what of the transition from this to the positive religions? It is managed just like the transition to positive communities or states; as the latter arise by all abdicating their natural rights in favour of one, so the religious community or "formed religion" arises by the individuals giving up their own opinions, and the body intrusting to such persons as it believes to act under the

[1] The work of Hobbes chiefly considered here is his *Leviathan, or the Matter, Form, and Power of a Commonwealth, Ecclesiastical and Civil* (1651).

divine command, the task of setting up suitable forms and acts of divine worship. These religious authorities, however, must, in Hobbes's view, be placed in the same persons as the political authority, whether these be founders of states, who set up religion as a constituent element of the state, or founders of religions who found the state as an element of religion. The validity of the religious authority always rests on a social sanction; and as the state alone is equipped with the necessary power, the sovereign representative of the power of the state must be at the same time the supreme authority in religion, from whom all ecclesiastical acts emanate as well as those of the civil authority. State and church, magistracy and priesthood, are thus one and the same thing, only regarded from different sides. The sovereign state determines the faith and worship of the citizens as well as the rest of their lives. As nothing is intrinsically good or evil, these notions resting solely on the verdict of society, so there is no essentially true, or essentially false religion; what the community has fixed and recognised is the right faith, and every other is to be rejected: liberty of belief is quite out of the question.

This philosophical proof of Cæsaropapism is to be explained, in the first place, externally from the course of English history from Henry VIII. to Cromwell. The deeper reason of it lies in the natural affinity which exists between sceptical naturalism, with its denial of all inner certitude of truth, and absolute positivism, which finds in historical authorities of the most fortuitous character, the sole and only pillar of faith and virtue.

English Deism, however, was first placed on its definite philosophical basis by JOHN LOCKE, who here occupies a position analogous to that of Wolff in the German Illumination.

But while Wolff was a dogmatic rationalist, Locke is an empiricist. The former started from the notion of God, and sought to demonstrate from it his existence and his attributes; but Locke starts from the empirical principle that there are no innate ideas, that the soul is originally a *tabula rasa*, and obtains all its ideas

from experience, external and internal, and all its knowledge from the combination of those simple ideas. Accordingly Locke rejects the assertion that the idea of God is innate in man, and is necessarily specific, and holds that even experience declares the contrary. For there are, he holds, nations to whom the notion of God is strange, and besides, the greatest variety of opinion exists among the various nations as to the nature of God. According to Locke, the notion of God proceeds like other notions from experience and reflection; we frame it by combining and magnifying the most excellent attributes which experience makes known to us in ourselves and in other beings. But that such a constructed and ideal being actually exists, we conclude *via causalitatis* from the existence of the world, and from our own existence; the latter presupposes a cause, which must lie in a being of the highest power, and also, because thought cannot be produced by that which is without thought, of the highest intelligence. But a more definite knowledge of the divine being, such as Wolff sets forth in such detail in his *Theologia Naturalis*, Locke does not consider possible.

On the other hand, these two philosophers approach each other very closely in their views of revelation, a matter of such importance in determining the attitude of a thinker towards positive religion. Locke also considers a supernatural revelation to be possible, and to have actually taken place in Christianity; but he insists as strongly as Wolff does, and even more logically, that this revelation must not in any way contradict the natural revelation given us by God in our reason. Only the latter is immediately certain to us, and is the foundation of all our knowledge: hence no revelation can be of force which contradicts our clear and definite knowledge, because it would then undermine all the principles of knowledge. To know supernatural revelation is always difficult; of that immediate revelation which consists in an impression made by God on the soul of man, nothing definite can be said; but the mediate revelation, of which we can only know anything at second-hand, is for that very reason much less certain than the knowledge we obtain in a natural way from our own ideas agreeing together. Whoever, therefore, proposes to do

away with reason in order to make room for revelation, is a foolish fanatic who, in truth, does away with both, to set in their place nothing but the groundless imaginations of his own head; he acts as foolishly as if he sought to persuade a man to put out his eyes in order to perceive the more clearly through a telescope the distant light of an invisible star. In this parable revelation answers to the telescope, by which the sight and keenness of the natural eye, that is, reason, is not done away with, but assisted so as to see further and better than the eye can when unaided. Only in this very relative sense does Locke allow the revelation given in Christianity to transcend reason: not in the absolute sense of Wolff; what it contains is not mysteries and wonders quite above reason, quite incomprehensible, but just that which is the subject-matter of reasonable knowledge. It has, however, a twofold superiority to reason. It communicates truths which reason would have discovered later, at an earlier stage, and it communicates truths which would otherwise only have been accessible to the more reflecting, in such a way as to arrest the attention and obtain the assent of all. This is precisely what we shall meet with later as the view of Lessing and of Kant; but it is remarkable that Locke, though an experimentalist, works out the rational principle in this instance more logically and with more critical insight than the dogmatic rationalists, Leibniz and Wolff. And we have likewise to notice that, in his view of the nature of Christianity, Locke stands nearer the former than the latter. In his work, *The Reasonableness of Christianity as delivered in the Scriptures* (1695), he points out that Christianity is in fact nothing but a new and purer moral law combined with the strongest motives for keeping it in the hope of heavenly felicity; and that, while it contains no matter which transcends reason, it yet is in the form of a positive announcement, and so rests on a supernatural revelation. Faith, in the supernatural revelation, is accordingly the form, the necessary historical form, of the introduction to the world of Christianity, a form which enables moral truths, which are capable of being discovered by reason, to gain and to keep practical authority for a religious community.

In his general philosophical principles Locke has much in common with Hobbes; but he differs from him very markedly in the practical consequences at which he arrives. Caesaropapism, which Hobbes wrote to uphold, he most decidedly rejects. "He who mixes up together church and state," he says, "mixes up things most contradictory to each other, heaven and earth." He shows, quite in the spirit of Spinoza, that toleration of the various kinds of belief is as much for the advantage of the state, being the only plan to preserve internal harmony, as it accords with the nature of the Christian church, which is a free union of convictions, and aims at a life according to the laws of virtue. The church differs in scope and aim entirely from the state, which has to do with men's outward acts, not with their private convictions, and which must therefore tolerate all opinions, so long as they are not practically dangerous.

In this defence of tolerance, freedom of thought, and general humanity, the Earl of SHAFTESBURY, one of the most spirited and amiable of writers, and that not of his own age only, was quite on Locke's side, though in other respects he was far from agreeing with his philosophical principles.[1] "Whoever," he says, "has once come to take delight in the habit of thinking, will not stop short when he comes to a post with the inscription, *Ne plus ultra!* It is our own thought that must draw the limit to our thinking, and how can we discover whether the limiting thought is true, but by putting it freely to the test? Men who stop short in their thinking at the command of another, or from fear, are like beasts of burden, which stand still at the word of their driver. These half-thinkers are, of all creatures said to be endowed with reason, the most absurd, miserable, and perverse." Shaftesbury's own thought, however, moves not so much in strict philosophical argumentation as in the freer form of conversations, which are by no means wanting in the salt of healthy humour and biting wit. He set it up as a rule that it is the principal criterion of truth that it should be able to stand

[1] He published a collection of his treatises on questions of ethics and of taste, under the title, *Characteristics of Men, Manners, Opinions, and Times.* 3 vols. 1711. Compare J. v. Gizycki: *die Philosophie Shaftesbury's.* 1876.

the test of ridicule; but at the same time he desired to have a firm distinction drawn between false wit and that which is genuine and legitimate: as against true earnestness, he said, laughter is the most ridiculous thing possible, but as against fanaticism and superstition of every kind no more effective weapon can be used than ridicule. This "test of ridicule" is nothing but the instinctive judgment of the sound human reason (sensus communis) on truth and error. This is his theoretical formal principle; and quite of a piece with it is the practical material principle of his view of the world, the natural moral sense the autonomy of which he resolutely defends both against the heteronomy of religious authorities and against the empiricism of Locke. Virtue, he says, is not a mere arbitrary human statute, it is a reality in itself, as much as harmony in music, or symmetry and beauty in nature. As the faculty for discerning these is not artificially produced in us by education, but resides in us by nature, if not as an innate and full-grown idea, yet as an instinct, as an involuntary delight in the harmony of what is beautiful and an involuntary dislike of what is ugly, so the perception of what is morally good is also ours by nature. Indeed this is in so far akin to the beautiful as it consists in that harmony of our affections which is according to the truth of human nature. For nature has placed in us affections of two kinds: the selfish, which are directed to our own wellbeing, and the social, which aim at the good of others; both are in themselves equally justified, and they contribute equally to the good of mankind, if, that is to say, they act in a due proportion to each other. Now when we reflect on the right or the wrong, the duly ordered or the disordered relation of our natural affections and the acts which arise out of them, this set of ideas becomes in turn the object of a new set of affections, which Shaftesbury calls the *reflex* affections, and in which, as they are the expression of reason, he sees the truly distinctive mark of human nature. These are the affections of moral approbation or disapprobation, of respect, reverence, enthusiasm or their opposites, which form the basis of moral judgments and notions, and in which accordingly the autonomous norm of the morality which is natural

to us consists. Now as virtue is based on the natural feeling of moral approbation, and is nothing but that beauty or inner harmony of the soul which the true nature of man demands, it is itself the truly satisfying state of man. As health and sickness comprise in themselves the feeling of material well-being or illness, so virtue and vice comprise in themselves the feeling of mental happiness or misery; and the dignity and value of virtue consist in this, that it has its reward immediately in itself, in the enjoyment by the mind of moral health and beauty.

Such are the main ideas of the morals of Shaftesbury: the closest parallel to them is to be found in Giordano Bruno's work *On the Heroic Affections*, and in Spinoza's doctrine of the affections. With the latter of these Shaftesbury further has in common the pure idealism which leads him to reject all striving for reward—in fact, he considers the doctrine of rewards and punishments to be the weak side of religious morals, and of Christianity too, so far as it appeals to these motives; though he values Christianity highly for its truly moral principle of *love*. "To make rewards and punishments the principal motives of duty is to destroy the Christian religion, and to surrender and cast away its greatest principle, the principle of love." Of those pious people whose attitude towards virtue is that of children to physic, with whom the rod on the one side and sweets on the other are the most powerful motives, he considers that they are in fact still children and deserve to be treated as such; they do indeed require *education* by means of the motives of reward and punishment, but that need only be continued till they have become capable of a higher instruction and pass from their present slavish state to the noble service of inclination and love. Taking up this (Leibnizian) view of pedagogy, of accommodation to the childlike consciousness which has still to be trained to self-determination, Shaftesbury does not quarrel with what he regards as the imperfections of positive religion; he declares it to be a dictate of humanity to hide strong truths from weak eyes; he also allows it to be politically advisable that in religion the people should be under public guidance, and the clergy be intrusted with this duty by the state, as

state servants. But Shaftesbury does not, like Hobbes, make the duty of the state extend so far as to prescribe the religious views the citizens have to adopt, or to suppress free inquiry in matters of religion. In this matter he cannot help extolling the humane tolerance of antiquity to all kinds of views, as contrasted with the new (Christian) style of government, which regards the future happiness of men more than the present, and thus from sheer supernatural love of men discards the natural duties of humanity and shows us how to torment each other in the most pious way, and to arouse antipathies and eternal hatreds such as no temporal interest could engender. And in general the jealous care bestowed by Christians on the matter of happiness in the other world appears to him not to act favourably on the growth of the purely human virtues which are concerned with the affairs of this earthly life. And in this he sees the reason of the comparative neglect in Christianity of the heroic virtues of friendship and patriotism, as these do not affect the man whose conversation is in heaven.

But for all this Shaftesbury is by no means inclined to an entire separation of morality from religion; indeed he connects them together more intimately than did Spinoza or Kant. If virtue consists in the development of the reasonable affections which are directed to all that is beautiful and good, it cannot be indifferent whether or not beauty and goodness are found in the world itself. The melancholy view of the world of the Atheist, who sees in the universe only a sample of disorder, may very readily embitter his mind and injure his morality: while the Theist, on the other hand, believes even in times of misfortune in the divine origin of all the world's laws, and is moved thereby to resign himself to the course of the world and to be reconciled to his lot. Hence Shaftesbury determines the relation of virtue to religion to be such that the former is completed by the latter, for where the latter is absent there cannot be the same degree of goodness, steadfastness, control of the affections: nor the same evenness and harmony of spirit. "And thus the highest perfection of virtue depends on faith in God." This at once points out the way in which this faith arises and is confirmed in our

mind. Not fear, according to Shaftesbury, is the fundamental emotion of religion, but the admiration, allied to love, of the beauty and order of the world. Nor is faith based on the testimony of miracles, which themselves require to be attested: this gaping after miracles only brings confusion into the world, and destroys that admirable simplicity of arrangement in which we recognise the one infinite and perfect principle. It is just the concatenation and order of things which we observe in every part of the world that points out to us the one purpose which all things serve, and at the same time a principle of this unity, which the analogy of our own constitution obliges us to conceive as a uniting and thinking principle, as the spirit in the great body of the world, even though we should not be able to frame any idea of it more precise than this. But so much is certain, according to Shaftesbury, that this spiritual principle, just because it is the universal principle, and can have no particular or opposing interests, is perfect *goodness*, and has arranged all things in the best way for the good of the whole. Even what appear to be the evils of the world, Shaftesbury shows quite in the manner of Bruno and of Leibniz, only appear to a limited, selfish, and narrow way of thinking to be in conflict with the goodness of the world; they disappear before it so soon as we place ourselves at the point of view of the whole and of its eternal and perfectly wise laws. To believe that whatever the order of the world may bring forth is at the bottom just and good, and never to doubt this even when we are in misfortune, but to resign ourselves willingly to its operation, this, according to Shaftesbury's most religious as well as most profound view of the world, is true piety, and at the same time the perfection of virtue. We must acknowledge that this philosophy far transcends the ordinary level of Deism: it combines Spinoza and Leibniz, and holds out a hand to our Lessing and Herder, Schiller and Goethe.

A year after Locke's book on *The Reasonableness of Christianity*, appeared the book, afterwards famous, of JOHN TOLAND, *Christianity not Mysterious* (1696), a treatise which shows that there is nothing in the gospel either contrary to, or above reason, and that no Christian doctrine can properly be called a mystery. In this work Toland

seeks to prove that Christianity is thoroughly rational, or in perfect agreement with the religion of reason. He starts from Locke's definition of the relation between reason and revelation. Revelation is the way by which we attain to the knowledge of certain truths, but the ground for our believing them is not revelation, but reason, which is in general the foundation of whatever certainty we possess. Hence all the doctrines of revelation must be in agreement with it, *i.e.* they must neither be contrary to reason nor above it. It may be true that certain religious notions such as God or eternity are not capable of being represented, but, as Toland correctly observes, they are notwithstanding this reasonably thinkable, they are by no means mere mysteries above reason. Where the gospel speaks of mysteries it does not refer to incomprehensible things but to things which are perfectly comprehensible, which at an earlier time, before the revelation of the gospel, were hidden, but are now completely revealed by it, and so have ceased to be secrets. The doctrine of Christ was at first perfectly simple and reasonable, and secrets, incomprehensibilities, only made their way into it through the adoption by the church doctors of Jewish and heathen mysteries and philosophical doctrines. The nature of faith involves no demand that is mysterious: faith is not a blind acceptance, but a firm conviction built on reasonable grounds. What we do not understand we cannot believe, and so faith presupposes an intelligent knowledge of its object. This demand that the contents of faith must be rational was not, however, meant by Toland to preclude a belief in miracles, since miracles may very well be understood as effects of the supernatural power of God, not suspending but intensifying and directing the forces of nature. This point of view is essentially what is known in theology under the term "rational supernaturalism." Like all similar attempts to mediate between opposing views it exhibits a certain lack of clearness and consistency, but it is important as a transition. Such men as Leibniz and Mosheim thought highly of Toland's work. At a later period, however, Toland inclined to a naturalistic Pantheism (in his *Pantheisticon*, 1720) which no longer allowed of any positive recognition of the value of religion.

Still more celebrated and influential than Toland's book on Christianity without mysteries was that published by MATTHEW TINDAL in 1730: *Christianity as old as the Creation, or the Gospel a Republication of the Religion of Nature.* This work ranks as the classical expression of the leading ideas of Deism, the "Bible of all Deists;" it was translated into German in 1741 by J. L. Schmidt, a disciple of Wolff, and was not without influence on the German Illumination. Tindal starts from the principle that the true religion can only be the one religion which is common to all, and has its root in human nature itself, and he takes it for granted (this is the invariable *petitio principii* in these circles) that this was also the original religion. In point of contents it is one with morality, which consists in acting according to the reason of things or according to the law of nature: for if the latter is regarded as the will of God, then this moral acting is at the same time the "reasonable service" of God, or religion, which is as natural to man as reason itself, and must therefore be unchangeably the same, as the rational nature of man is ever the same. In the same way, Tindal argues from the perfection of God as goodness satisfied in itself, that he desired to give to men no other law than that which tends to their happiness, which must always be the same for all, as human nature is everywhere and always the same. Whatever deviates from this nature, which alone is true, is superstition; the source of superstition Tindal finds in the attempt to gain the divine good-will by particular services and performances, an attempt in which the deceits of the clergy have played a prominent part.

The pre-Christian religions were all a mixture of true religion and superstition; but, according to Tindal, it was the purpose of the appearance of Christ to make known again, republish, restore, the original natural religion, and confront it with these corruptions; not to add anything new to the law of nature, but only to clear away the false accretions of superstition. Christianity accordingly is a new thing only as contrasted with what immediately preceded it, but it is at the same time the oldest of all; it is the restoration of the original. But if Christianity is nothing but the reasonable religion of the natural

law, then reason must of course be the norm by which to expound it; and to prove that this is really the case, Tindal appeals to the general practice of theologians, who explain away and allegorise what is offensive so as to get it to agree with the reason of things. Inquiring reason finds, it is true, according to Tindal, many an erroneous statement in Scripture too, *e.g.*, the prophecies in the New Testament of the speedy return of Christ, which after seventeen centuries are still unfulfilled. Nor does he show much consideration for the dogmas of the church; these mysteries of doctrine, he considers, were only introduced by the clergy to promote superstition; the belief in authority which they serve to uphold appears to him to be the radical evil of religion by which reason is dethroned, and the rational motives of action rendered inoperative and replaced by slavish fear and blind fanaticism. For all this Tindal declares that he is no heretic, but considers that all men in proportion as they agree with each other must agree with him.

The identity of Christianity with the moral religion of reason was a point which Tindal as well as his predecessors rather asserted or deduced from general considerations *a priori* than sought to prove by historical inquiry into the documents containing the Christian doctrine. In the empirical tendency of English thought it was to be expected that attention would be directed to the historical proof; and the consequence was that an acute critical examination of the Bible came into existence in England much sooner than in Germany, though in the former country it certainly had not the abiding influence on theology that it had in the latter. It is remarkable that the first to attempt to provide a historical foundation for Deism was a simple workman who was self-educated in theology. THOMAS CHUBB, in his book *The True Gospel of Jesus Christ* (1738), sought to determine the true meaning of Christianity by a careful examination of the doctrine of Jesus, and came to the result that the contents of the gospel were nothing but the reasonable morality of Jesus which, by insisting on the law of reason obscured among both Jews and Gentiles, sought to lead men to the greatest happiness both temporal

and eternal; while all the miraculous narratives or secret doctrines about the person and the origin of Jesus were mere Jewish fables or abstruse private opinions of the apostles which had nothing to do with the simple gospel of Jesus. The church doctrine of the divinity of Christ Chubb considered to be a corruption of Christianity which had arisen out of a misunderstanding of Oriental phraseology; while the Pauline doctrine of justification by faith appeared to him to be morally questionable. In this honest self-taught scholar, who came from his trade to Biblical criticism, we trace more nearly than in the other Deists the spirit and the points of view of German rationalism; a mind practically earnest but of narrow intelligence can take hold of Christianity as of other things only on the moral side; it is all comprised to his view in a purified if not a profound morality; and everything that lies beyond this, whether religious mysticism or speculative ideas, he fails to appreciate. Hence naturally he cannot possibly understand the origin or the legitimate place of dogma, the very form in which the specific religious contents of Christianity struggled for an expression in accordance with the requirements of worship.

The thinker who dealt most successfully of the Deists with the historical criticism of the Christian sources was THOMAS MORGAN. At first the minister of a dissenting congregation and afterwards a physician, he combined in a peculiar manner critical acuteness with speculative depth. In his mystic consciousness of the indwelling of God he resembles Spinoza, and stands quite apart from the ordinary moral Deism; and this characteristic is manifestly connected with his deeper understanding of the specific element of Christian religion. The other Deists and rationalists trace back Christianity to its Jewish-Christian beginnings; but Morgan felt his task to be rather to clear Christianity of the Jewish leaven which had been mixed in it from the first. Hence also his preference for Paul, in whom he saw "the sole representative of true Christianity, the great free-thinker of his time, and brave champion of reason against authority." Morgan shows so clear an insight[1] into the difference between Paul

[1] In his work, *The Moral Philosopher*, a Dialogue between a Christian Deist and a Christian Jew (1737-40).

and the Jewish Christians in reference to the question of the law, that he might almost be called the precursor of the Tübingen criticism. His treatment of the Old Testament history is very similar to that of Reimarus, but his New Testament criticism is on the point of passing from the dogmatic subjective style practised by the other Deists and rationalists, to become objective and historical.

Biblical criticism having once been stirred, two controversies sprang to life respecting the main points of the traditional apologetics: prophecy and miracles. As to the first, COLLINS showed in his *Discourse on the Grounds and Reasons of the Christian Religion* (1724), that the proof from prophecy employed by the writers of the New Testament is not valid, because they treat their citations from the Old Testament allegorically, and that such an attempt is simply due to the necessity which is felt at every change of religion to connect the new as closely as possible with the old. His work called forth a number of pamphlets and replies, with the biblical and theological discussions of which we need not further occupy ourselves. Similar to the sensation caused by Collins's attack on the argument from prophecy was that produced by THOMAS WOOLSTON'S criticism of the argument from miracles, which may be regarded as the precursor of the mythical theory of miracles by Strauss. Woolston shows that the miracles related in the Bible cannot really have happened as miracles, and cannot be explained as natural occurrences; that in these narratives we must see a number of allegories which symbolise spiritual truths; the stories of the resurrection of Lazarus, for example, and of Christ himself, are symbols of the rising of the spirit of the true religion from the grave of the letter. The controversies to which this gave rise led the acute PETER ANNET (1768) to a critical inquiry into the narratives of the resurrection in the Gospels and the Acts, as well as to an attack on the principle of the possibility of miracles. In this view he not only urged the metaphysical argument of Spinoza, that the laws of nature, being determinations of the divine will, are as unchangeable as God himself; he also indicated the position afterwards insisted on by Hume that it is impossible to assure ourselves with certainty that any particular miracle has

actually taken place, because the probability that the narrative of the miracle is mixed up with error, self-deception or intentional deceit, must, according to the whole analogy of experience, be very much greater in every case than the probability, which offends against all analogies, that a miracle has actually taken place.

The Deistic movement had begun with taking for granted the absolute reasonableness of Christianity, which was identified, in the form in which it is given in the Bible, with the religion of reason. Then critical distinctions had been drawn between different elements of Christianity, not the Christianity of the Church alone, but also that of the Bible; and some of it being judged true and some false, some of it permanent and some temporary, it was no longer the absolute but only the relative reasonableness of this empirical Christianity that was asserted. But the Tindals, Collinses, Chubbs, and Woolstons had always been quite confident that what they subtracted from Christianity was unessential, that only the remainder which they held fast was important, and that this, the main part of it, was above all doubt. But how if this confidence should turn out to be unfounded? How if it should appear that in the system of belief which they attacked the different parts were so intimately connected with each other that the removal of some of them must of necessity bring about the ruin of the rest as well? And in fact that could not fail to happen which afterwards took place in the history of German rationalism, and always must take place from the very nature of the case. Doubt which began with attacking the so-called supernatural dogmas and attacked them with the greater confidence because it believed itself to have an unassailable stronghold in the truths of the natural religion of reason, turned at last against the latter, and found that their claim to reasonableness was scarcely better founded, their arguments scarcely more convincing than those connected with positive doctrines. This complete breach of critical reason with dogmatic belief formed the conclusion of the Deistic movement; doubt, now made complete, turns at last upon its own premises, and in destroying these destroys itself, whether to make room for a new

building on a firmer foundation, as with Kant, or to leave the field again to dogmatic faith unbroken as before, as in the case of Hume. DAVID HUME is related to the Deism of Locke, in the same way as Kant to the Illumination of Wolff: in both instances half criticism was overcome by criticism worked out thoroughly; but in Kant this victory formed at the same time the foundation of a higher point of view, of speculative ethical rationalism; while with Hume it proved to be nothing but the bankruptcy of empiricism, empty and barren scepticism.

The confidence felt by Deism in the infallibility of its religion of reason was based on two presuppositions. The first was the assumption that the two main pillars of it, the belief in the existence of a personal God and the belief in the immortality of the soul, were supported by arguments possessing mathematical certainty, and incapable of being shaken (even Locke thought so). The other was the opinion that this reasonable religion was so natural to man that it must have been known from the beginning, and that all deviations from it must be due to the acts of individuals (priestly rites, etc.). David Hume turned the edge of his criticism on these two presuppositions of Deism. The first he assailed in his *Dialogues concerning Natural Religion* (1778), which, though composed at a much earlier period, was only published after the author's death. The elaborate work, *The Natural History of Religion* (1757) was directed against the second.

The *Dialogues concerning Natural Religion* begin with the assurance, with regard to which the theologian and the sceptic may be of one mind, that the true, that is the sceptical, philosophy is on the best of terms with theology, because, next to complete ignorance, there is nothing so favourable to the security of faith as the conviction that nowhere can we know anything, and must therefore take refuge in unconditional belief. With this introduction, the two-edged irony of which reminds us of similar utterances in Bayle, Hume has as it were purchased a licence for unrestrained criticism. This criticism turns first to the cosmological proof of the existence of God, against which it is urged, just as Kant urged later, that it is illegitimate to argue from the world to a transcendent cause; because, in

so doing, we go beyond the order of cause and effect with which we are acquainted in the world itself, and take for granted the *a priori* notion of an ultimate cause. The teleological argument is examined more carefully. It is illegitimate to conclude from the adaptation of the world to its purpose to an architect of the world, because our concluding from an effect to a certain cause is nothing more than an association of ideas guided by the analogy provided by experience; and only extends so far as there are analogies; but these are wanting for an argument to the maker of the world, if for no other reason than that the case is absolutely singular. If the argument from analogy, from one part to a far distant part, is but doubtful, how much more doubtful must be a similar argument from the part to the whole, from motion inside time to the first beginning of all! And besides, for the universe as a whole, the analogy of the natural becoming, or growth of organisms, is much more applicable than that of artificial production by human skill; why, then, should we not rather, in accounting for the world, be guided by the principle of natural development than seek for a transcendent cause? And could not the apparent adaptation of the world be merely the result of happy chance; among the many possible combinations of the world's elements one having finally come about of so fortunate a nature that the forms to which it gave rise were able to maintain themselves? This replacement of teleology by the changing combinations of the causes in operation, a principle now famous in connection with Darwinism, Hume regarded as a mere passing suggestion. But he lingers and expends great care in the inquiry whether that presupposition of the teleological argument is justified, which assumes that the world in every part shows adaptation. Against such an assumption he appeals to the well-known theological commonplace of the badness of the world, the earthly vale of tears, etc., and works out this pessimist view with a mischievous complacency, to ask at length what right we have to conclude from a world which is so little perfect to a perfectly good and all-wise Maker? The opponent thus driven into a corner is obliged to concede that these attributes contain an exaggeration, and that it would be safer and better to speak only

of a divine beneficence, guided by wisdom and limited by necessity. But this is not enough for our sceptic: he holds that if we take the world simply as it is, with all its radical defects, we should rather regard it as the first attempt of a God who was a novice, or as the weak production of a God who had grown old; indeed, even the idea of a plurality of makers, who had been counterworking each other, might be able to say something for itself. In short, whether we assume one God, or many, or none, the world remains always equally incomprehensible, and therefore all these assumptions are equally well and equally ill founded. To Hume the sceptical *Ignoramus* is the last word.

In two separate essays[1] he applies a similar criticism to the traditional arguments for the immortality of the soul. Against the psychologico-metaphysical arguments from the nature of the soul he urges the fact of its being bound to the body and its normal functions. Against the theory of compensation in another world, he raises a similar objection to that of Spinoza, that it spoils morality by introducing into it legal considerations of reward and punishment. The separation of heaven and hell, too, he holds to be an abstraction which is not applicable to the actual constitution of men, in which good and evil are always found mingled together. The eternal punishment of hell, moreover, is quite disproportionate to sins done in time, and does not answer to the purpose of punishment, which is to reform. If retributive justice exists, it must show itself in this world, and if it does not show itself here, we have no right to conclude from its failure to operate in the world of which only we know anything, that it will operate in another, a problematical, world. But, in fact, the world of our experience does show retribution, inasmuch as virtue is accompanied by peace within, and vice by the opposite. To ask for more than this is to demand that the constitution of the world should be ordered according to our reason, as if it were the standard of things. Nor does Hume allow that any guarantee for immortality is to be found in the instinctive

[1] That on *Particular Providence and a Future State*, and that on *The Immortality of the Soul.*

desire of our soul for infinite development; our powers, he says, scarcely suffice to eke out this life in a satisfactory manner, how much less would they suffice for an eternity! On the contrary, in the powerful instinct of the fear of death, nature conveys to us a distinct warning against illusions respecting the other world. And experience shows that this other world is of no practical interest even for those who are theoretically convinced of its existence; and how ill would Nature have provided, had she implanted in us such a frivolous indifference regarding what is most important? After all this, Hume concludes with the surprising statement that we owe the knowledge of immortality, which is beyond the reach of reason, solely to revelation and the gospel, the value of which consists just in their giving us this information.

The result of his criticism is summed up by Hume as follows: The whole of natural theology resolves itself into the simple, but somewhat ambiguous and indistinct statement, that the cause or causes of the order of the universe probably bear some distant analogy to human intelligence; a statement which does not permit of being further extended or more precisely developed, and cannot become the motive of any particular course of action. If such be the case with regard to the basis of religion in reason, how are we to account for its origin and for the power which experience and history show it to have exercised? Hume's answer to this question is to be found in his work on the *Natural History of Religion.* The source of religion is not reason and its always problematical and powerless dialectic, but those practical potencies of our nature which though irrational are the sole moving power in human life, the passions of the soul and the fictions of fancy. More precisely, as Hume says with Hobbes, it was fear and hope that drove men from the first to seek their gods behind the unknown forces of nature, on which their welfare and their adversity depend; and in this process the anthropomorphic tendency of fancy helped effectively, framing personal beings out of the phenomena of nature. Hence it follows at once that the oldest form of religion was not monotheism, and that the earliest religion was by no means identical with the "religion of reason" of Deism. Hume also

gives an indirect proof of this very correct view; polytheism, he says, could not have sprung from an original monotheism, a clear knowledge of God could not have been lost. As little as men practised geometry before agriculture, so little had they a theistic knowledge of God before the development of culture in prehistoric times. The earliest men rather conceived their gods as man-like beings of great power, yet neither as almighty nor of an ideal morality, rather as beings affected with violent passions, and subject in their turn to the higher power of Nature (fate). Poetic allegories, apotheoses of men, and the representation of the gods in material forms, combined in many ways to quicken and adorn the growth of mythology. Out of these beginnings monotheism in time arose, not however by means of rational reflection about the world, but in consequence of practical, in fact of pathological motives: selfish interests led to the elevation of one god above others, the god of one's own people above the gods of other peoples; and in seeking to gain and to keep his favour, men flattered him with predicates of majesty which were constantly raised to a higher pitch, till at last he was raised to the rank of "Infinite." Thus came about the wonderful result, that irrational motives such as common fear and flattery led finally to a meeting with reason and philosophy. But the people cannot permanently remain in a pure monotheism; and they can do so the less the more pure and lofty the monotheism is. The natural desire to bring the Deity nearer, to make it more visible, to enter into more intimate relations with it, calls out the belief in mediatory beings, who, as representatives of the highest god, soon take his place and become the principal objects of worship, so that the old polytheism and idolatry little by little return. Thus in Hume's view the history of religion is constantly flowing backward and forward between polytheism and monotheism. As for the relative value of these two forms of religion Hume does not dispute the theoretical superiority of monotheism, but he denies its practical superiority; experience teaches, he says, that a monotheistic popular religion is no better than a polytheistic one, indeed that it is worse, on account of the exclusiveness and intolerance which adhere to it; the absurdities of heathen mythology are matched by those of

Catholic scholasticism, and the rudeness of heathen cults is even surpassed by the barbarities of ecclesiastical persecution. In general Hume considers the influence of popular religion on morality to be rather unfavourable than favourable: the coarse representations of divine caprice and arbitrariness and of the torments of hell, as they are products of human evil, so do they act on this evil with gathered force and tend to dehumanise men's minds. But the radical evil lies in the delusion which men cherish that they can win the favour of the Deity not by moral righteousness but by additional services, which, worthless in themselves, are made much more important than good conduct, and so serve to undermine morality. Thus religion, like everything in the world, has two sides; and it is difficult to say which of the two predominates in ordinary life. The best plan is to set one of the various superstitions after the other, and in the confusion to escape into the quieter if also darker realm of philosophy, which, just when we get to Hume, has no help whatever to give us!

The result with which Hume dismisses us is certainly a cheerless one; but none the less it is extremely instructive. The sceptic does not find immanent reason in religion any more than elsewhere: the whole of religion is to him, in its origin, development, and effects, an irrational pathological phenomenon. That is the opposite extreme to the optimistic rationalism which sees in historical religion a pure product of reason, and overlooks the element of emotion or passion, which plays so essential a part in the history of every religion. To the Deists positive religion was still half natural, half supernatural, and this half-and-half position Hume put an end to by applying to the subject a natural way of thinking, and regarding it, strictly if one-sidedly, from the platform of common sense. In acute observation of the actual phenomena presented in the history of religion he surpassed all others and made a contribution to the subject which must always be valuable. But that this whole natural process, in which so many human, impure, and untrue motives play a part, was yet guided and inspired by reason and led towards reason, true divine reason, as its main principle, there was nothing in the mind of the sceptic to enable him to see. Reason in its dogmatic wrappings

as a miraculous accompaniment of original revelation and of subsequent reforming revelations, Hume, as a logical and consistent critic, put away; but to understand reason in its speculative truth as the immanent principle of religious development or of the "education of humanity," this lay beyond Hume's sphere of vision and that of English empiricism generally: it was the task reserved for the critico-speculative philosophy of Germany.

CHAPTER V.

GOTTHOLD EPHRAIM LESSING.[1]

LESSING, the most brilliant son of the German Illumination, was also the first to overstep its limits. He completed the Illumination, since his critical faculty excelled it in keenness of perception: he overcame it, inasmuch as he caused its light to shine beyond its own self-imposed limits. Hitherto the representatives of Orthodoxy and Illumination, in contending about the dogmas of the Church and the narratives of the Bible, had proceeded upon the common assumption that the truth of Christianity itself must stand or fall with these; he cut away the ground from beneath this contention by proving that the common assumption was without basis or justification. Supposing even that the critical attacks upon the biblical narratives which he had published in the *Anonymous Fragments* (of Reimarus) were tenable, would Christianity itself be therewith overturned? such is the question which he puts in his pamphlet written in answer to Göze, Chief Pastor of Hamburg. And he shows that this question must necessarily be answered in the negative, by arguing,—that the Bible is not Christianity, that the letter is not the spirit, and finally, that truths of history can in no case be a proof for eternal truths of reason.

The Bible is not Christianity, for Christianity existed long before there was a Bible; for centuries it was propagated not by means of Scripture, but by oral communication, and for the whole ancient Church it was not the Bible, but the so-called "Rule of Faith," that comprehensive summary of ecclesiastical tradition, which was regarded as the highest dogmatic authority and court of appeal in all con-

[1] Schwarz, *Lessing als Theolog.* Danzel und Guhrauer, *Lessing, sein Leben und seine Werke.*

troversies. And not only can the Bible thus not be regarded as the *only* source of truth, it is not even an absolutely *pure* source of truth. We have to distinguish even in it between the true and the imperfect, between the essential and the accidental, between spirit and letter. It *contains* Religion indeed, but *is* not itself Religion. There is much in it which has no religious significance (the genealogy of Esau's descendants, for example, or the cloak of Paul at Troas, and the like); some is of doubtful religious value, such as many of the Old Testament examples of virtue; and other things of great importance for religion are not taught in all parts of the Bible with full clearness and distinctness; the Old Testament, for example, does not contain either the doctrine of Immortality or the full conception of the unity of God. Can then the truth of a religion, Lessing finally asks—and this brings the matter to a point—depend upon historical traditions which may be made subjects of criticism? Historical arguments, such as the biblical miracles and fulfilled prophecies are thought to afford, must always rest upon the credibility of external witnesses; but however great this may be, it can never afford more than a high degree of probability, it can never give that certainty which would be necessary for such a conviction as that on which we should rest our salvation. And moreover what argumentative force should there be for us in the miracles of a past time, which we ourselves neither have tested nor can test, which to us are nothing more than reports of miracles, and so must first of all be put to the proof according to the general rules of historical criticism? But even supposing we believed in their *historical* truth, what should be the consequence in respect of our *religious* faith? "What is meant by believing a historical truth? Surely nothing more than to acquiesce in it, to have nothing to urge against it, to be satisfied that another person should build upon it a second historical statement! If I (that is, suppose it to be the case that I) have nothing from a historical point of view to urge against the statement, that Jesus raised a man from the dead, must I therefore hold it as proved that God has a Son who is of like nature with himself? From the former historical truth to make a leap into

quite another kind of truth, and to require of me to reconstruct all my metaphysical and moral ideas in accordance therewith; to bid me, because I cannot oppose any credible witness to the resurrection of Christ, alter all my fundamental ideas of the nature of Deity to suit it;—if that is not a *μετάβασις εἰς ἄλλο γένος*,[1] I do not know what Aristotle understood under this designation." If it be said: But Christ himself declared that he is the Son of God, we must answer: even that he said this is only historically certain (and, we might add, in what sense he meant it is at all events historically problematical). But "inspired writers declare it." Yet it can only be historically known whether these writers were inspired and infallible. "That is the ugly wide ditch which I cannot get over, though I have often and earnestly attempted the leap." Thus Lessing finds himself continually forced back from every side to this result:—"contingent truths of history can never be made the proof for necessary truths of reason." The latter are known only by their own light, through the mind itself, whether this be the intellectual or specially the emotional *self-consciousness*, but never through external facts which may once have happened here or there. As a matter of fact, indeed, neither the theologian nor the simple Christian derives his saving faith from the Scripture, but, like historical Christianity itself, each individual Christian discovers his faith in himself before he seeks it in the Scripture. Faith, therefore, neither formerly nor at the present time, has the foundation of its certainty in the letter of the Bible; this lies much deeper; it rests upon the peculiar constitution of the human spirit, in the saving *conviction* (Gefühl) of the *heart*, which carries its truth in itself, independent of all arguments, and also of all objections on the part of the understanding, which latter can only threaten the historical outwork. With this thought, in which his self-defence against Göze culminates, Lessing raises himself completely to the standpoint of the critical-speculative Philosophy of Religion.

[1] Cf. Arist. *Anal.* post. i. 7. *οὐκ ἔστιν ἐξ ἄλλου γένους μεταβάντα δεῖξαι, οἷον τὸ γεωμετρικὸν ἀριθμητικῇ.* It is not possible to demonstrate, passing from one genus to another, as, for example, a geometrical (problem) by arithmetic.—Tr.

Although Lessing in this way overcame the Dogmatism which represents the historical, simply as such, as at the same time an eternal truth of faith, he is, on the other hand, just as far removed from that abstract unhistorical Rationalism, which finds no Reason in history, because it can only imagine Reason as that which is mature, which has no history, which is always the same and complete from the beginning. Lessing had, on the contrary, learned from Leibniz, into whose spirit he had entered in quite a different way from the representatives of the popular Philosophy and those of the Wolffian school, the notion of "Development" as the proper key to a living apprehension not only of the life of nature, but also of the life of mind. As soon as he applied this key to the history of Religion this became for him a history of the *Education of the Human Race.*

The treatise so entitled (the genuineness of which ought never to have been questioned) is a model of Lessing's art, by which he clothes deep and far-reaching thoughts in the plainest and most familiar form, in order to lead the reader from his own standpoint, by the inner dialectic of the subject itself, gradually and unconsciously onwards to a higher standpoint. Lessing starts from the ordinary conception of Revelation as a communication to the human spirit from without of new and higher knowledge; but when he proceeds to point out how this communication, after the manner of all education, has adapted itself to the progressive capacity of the human mind, and so ascended by degrees from the elementary stage where it was still imperfect to higher and purer truth, this educative revelation changes as it were under his hand into the philosophical thought of a natural development of the religious condition of mankind, which only in the subjective consciousness of man *appears* under the *form* of a Revelation coming to him from without. In order to leave the more discerning reader in no doubt as to this, the true meaning of the whole, Lessing himself says in his prefatory remarks: "Why are we not in the case of all positive Religions more willing to have regard merely to the process in accordance with which alone this human understanding in each region can expand and must still further expand, than to indulge in either amusement or anger over any one of such religions?

This scorn, this displeasure of ours, nothing in the best world could deserve, and should the religions of all things deserve it? Should God have part in everything else, only not in our errors?" We see that the positive religions are for Lessing (as subsequently for Hegel) nothing else than the necessary stages of development of the human understanding or of natural religion; none of them can thus be regarded as immediate Revelation in the sense of the Church, since in every one error mingles with its truth.

The stages then which the educating Revelation passes through are, according to Lessing, the following:—Since it was impossible for primitive mankind long to retain in its purity the conception of one only God, even though it were given them at first, but rather their reason, left to itself, resolved the one Infinite into many finites, there naturally sprang up Polytheism and Idolatry. In order to give the human reason thus going astray a better direction by means of a new impulse, God selected as the subject of a special education the single people of Israel, just the wildest and most uncultivated of peoples, so that he might make with it an entirely new beginning. This people he gradually accustomed to the notion of the One God, though still only in a relative sense which remained far below the true transcendental conception of the One. In like manner he at first prescribed as its ethical motives only earthly inducements and threatenings, since it was as yet capable of receiving these alone and not the notion of a recompence hereafter. The consequence was that when this nation, which had been so trained, came into contact with other nations, which had meanwhile been developing by the light of their own reason, it did not find itself in all respects superior to these; it had to acquire from the Persians the notion of the infinite world-God, who was not merely the chief among the gods of the nations; and from them as well as from the Greeks it had to learn the immortality of the soul. If thus, to begin with, Revelation had been the guide of Reason (*i.e.* of Israel), now in turn the Reason (of the heathen nations) threw light at once upon the Revelation (of Israel); such a mutual influence is so little unbecoming the common Originator of both, that in truth without it either the one or the other must have

been superfluous. (The religion of Revelation is, according to this, related to the religion of Nature only as a form of development of the natural constitution of the religious spirit, different in kind from it, but by no means of a higher kind.) When at length the time arrived when the pupil of Revelation was able and needing to receive nobler and worthier incitements to moral activity, the better schoolmaster came in the person of Christ, who was the first positive practical teacher of Immortality. The writings of the New Testament, composed by his disciples, became now "the second and at the same time better book of elementary instruction for the human race," which for centuries has occupied the human understanding, and enlightened it more than all other books, "though it might only be through the light which the human understanding itself has put into it." And as the boy looks upon the primer of his youth, every people had for a certain time to look upon this training-book of mankind, as the *non plus ultra* of all its knowledge; and even now those who are more advanced, who already look beyond this elementary book, ought to guard themselves against parading this before their weaker fellow-pupils, ought rather themselves to go back to it again and try whether that which they regarded as a device of method and of the art of instruction (for example, the mode of expression known as accommodation) is not perhaps something more.

In this way Lessing desires to put the enlightenment of his age in mind that within the husk which they were accustomed to cast aside as unworthy of notice and useless, there was still concealed a deeper kernel which ought before all things to be sought out. A splendid principle, and one which at the present day cannot be sufficiently laid to heart! He himself proceeds to give some noteworthy examples of this more profound and careful treatment as applied to the ecclesiastical dogmas most open to objection. He gives a speculative elaboration of the doctrine of the Trinity, thus following the lead of such predecessors as Augustine, Anselm, Thomas, Melanchthon; he attempts also a similar explanation of the doctrines of Original Sin and of Satisfaction. That in such expositions he departs more or less from the original literal meaning of the Dogma, he does not hide

from himself; nevertheless he is thoroughly satisfied of the propriety of such speculations, for "the elaboration of revealed truths into truths of reason is absolutely necessary, if they are to be of any assistance to the human race. When they were revealed they were certainly not yet truths of reason, but they were revealed in order to become such." And it is not the speculations which do harm, but only the attempts to keep people from them.

The education of Man must, however, like every other, have an *aim*. And this can only consist in bringing men at length to do the good because it is good, and not because arbitrary rewards are attached to it. This period of the eternal, new Gospel, to which the New Testament writings themselves point forward, will surely come, however it may savour of fanaticism to say that one is himself to witness its arrival. For "Providence proceeds with secret step; it has so much to carry with it upon the way, and the shortest line is not always the nearest." The divine plan of education contemplates thus the *autonomy* of the theoretical and practical reason; what at first appeared a revealed truth, one given from without, must become a self-excogitated truth of reason; what had been positive law with external motives must become the pure love of good for the good's sake; the mind, which at first failing to comprehend itself, believed it only possible to receive truth and goodness from without by means of positive communication, must come to itself and cause the semblance of the external and positive to disappear in the essentially subjective nature of the mind when it has become conscious of itself. Here therefore we have the fundamental and central thought of all modern speculation; Lessing's *Education of the Human Race* is the programme which through many diverse forms has been ever more richly and more purely developed, and which was distinctly and thoroughly worked out in the Hegelian Philosophy of Religion.

In his *Education of the Human Race* Lessing considered the positive religions from their *ideal side*, as containing an element of reason, so far as he found in them the stages of development of the religious spirit. But he did not, on the other hand, overlook their

natural side, the accidental and externally conditioned character of their historical appearance; and thus he gives an early indication of the necessity for supplementing the *a priori* idealism of speculation *by filling it with matter* derived from modern historical investigation. He conceives[1] positive religion to have sprung from natural religion in an analogous way to that in which positive law sprang from natural law—through the agreement of those forming a community to adopt certain common conceptions and ceremonies. The sanction of this common agreement lay in the respect entertained for its founder, who "gave out" that this body of law just as certainly came from God, only through the instrumentality of the founder, as that which was universal and essential (natural religion) was given immediately in each man's reason. All positive religions are true, in so far as they are practically needful to bring about an agreement and unity in the public observance of religion; but they are all false (or become so) as the conventional weakens and displaces the essential. "The best positive or revealed religion is that which encumbers natural religion with the fewest conventional additions, which least confines the beneficial workings of natural religion." We shall meet again with the same thoughts in Kant; that they are still too closely involved in the abstract dualism between "natural" and "positive" which marked the philosophy of the Illumination, cannot be denied; but the ideas of the *Education of the Human Race* already point us to the direction in which this dualism must be overcome.

This same distinction between the natural or essential and the positive or conventional Lessing applied to Christianity in the small fragment[2] upon *The Religion of Christ and the Christian Religion*. By the former is meant the religion which Christ himself as man acknowledged and practised, which every man may have in common with him and must the more strongly desire to have, the more exalted and attractive the character which he attributes to Christ in his purely human aspect. The Christian religion, on the other hand, is that which holds Christ to have been more than a

[1] In the fragment upon *Revealed and Natural Religion*, Works, xi. p. 247, *sqq.*

[2] Works, xi. p. 242 *f.*

man and exalts him to be the object of worship. The first Lessing finds taught with the greatest clearness in the Gospels, the other, on the contrary, quite uncertainly and ambiguously. This opinion indeed does not altogether agree with what Lessing himself elsewhere remarked concerning the Gospel of John, that in it the higher idea of Christianity, rising equally above Judaism and heathenism, received for the first time a distinct expression. From this very accurate observation an answer might have been derived to the question: how it has happened, and could not but happen, that the Christian religion (the belief in Christ) was a development of the religion of Christ? But in order to obtain a full insight into this process, which affords the only key to the problem of Christian dogma in general, the data of historical criticism were indispensable, and these were still beyond the biblical science of the time.

To declare the "religion of Christ" in the sense just explained as the religion of pure humanity, to be the only true religion of "the everlasting Gospel," as against all positive, legal, and at the same time exclusive religions, was the aim of the last work of Lessing, the drama of *Nathan*, in which criticism and poetry concluded a unique alliance. Lessing himself proclaims it to be his purpose in this work to prove "that it is by no means a thing of yesterday to find persons in every nation, who have held aloof from all revealed religion and have yet been good people;" he desires to contrast with them the intolerant "Christian mob." The latter is represented in the drama by the priestly fanatical Patriarch and the coarsely superstitious Dajah; the contrasted mode of thought, free humanism, by Saladin, Sittah, and especially Nathan; between these stand those characters in whom religious training is combined with a good heart, and hence appears more as a power imparting warmth than as a narrowing influence; the master of the temple, the friar and the dervish, as well as the adopted daughter of Nathan, Recha, who indeed has been brought up in a religion without a creed, and has had "the seed of reason sown in her soul," but who nevertheless has been fascinated by the childishly imaginative world of miracles and angels, and hence has the lesson to learn—"that the indulgence of

devout fancies is much easier than the accomplishment of good deeds." In consequence of the manner in which the rôles are thus distributed, Lessing has been accused of having allowed himself to be betrayed by his polemic against Christian exclusiveness into injustice with regard to Christianity itself, since he not merely puts it on a level with the other religions, but even sets it at a disadvantage in respect of them, inasmuch as its representatives in the drama are sometimes proud, sometimes stupid, while the ideal humanity is represented only by Jews and Mohammedans. Lessing himself said, in reply to this :—"If any one maintains that I have offended against poetic propriety and been anxious to select such characters from among Jews and Mussulmans, I would call to mind that Jews and Mussulmans were at that time the only learned men; that the injury which revealed religions inflict upon the human race can at no time have been more striking to a reasonable man than in the period of the crusades; and that there are not wanting indications on the part of the chroniclers that such a reasonable man was found just in a Sultan." The main reason, however, is perhaps rather to be sought in Lessing's strong desire to hold up before Christians the hatefulness of intolerance and to combat their arrogant bearing towards other religions. For this purpose it was evidently most suitable that he should cause the fault which he wished to combat to be represented in the person of Christians, and the virtue opposed to it by non-Christians. It is in favour of this supposition that Lessing takes occasion to identify humanism with the true ideal Christianity —("Nathan, Nathan, you are a Christian! 'fore God, there never was a better Christian!"), and on the other hand to represent empirical, positive historical Judaism as the original source and type of all proud and exclusive particularism, which Christian and Mussulman have but *inherited from it.* Rightly therefore have men like Mendelssohn and Herder been able to find no kind of disparagement of Christianity in this work; the latter openly praised it as "a piece of heroism" (*eine Mannesthat*).

The theme of the work avowedly finds its most significant expression in the parable of the "Three Rings;" which of these was

the right one could not be directly recognised by any outward indication, only indirectly by the practical results of each. Hence follows the exhortation: "Well, then, let every one strive to bring to light the power of the Stone in his ring! Let there come to the aid of this power meekness, hearty peaceableness, well-doing, most profound devotion to God! And if, then, the powers of the stones appear in your children's children, I invite them after a thousand thousand years before this throne. Then will a wiser man than I sit upon this throne and speak." The meaning of this deliverance is evidently as follows: "The truth of a positive religion is not to be made out by means of external historically-given criteria, for it is not a matter of dogma at all, and does not consist of ready-made maxims and traditions, given once for all; its essence lies in the practical power which it must itself continually evince in the experiences of life. In so far as each one proves itself operative as the practical power of true goodness—so far, but only so far, is it to be recognised as true religion; the relative truth of the positive religions, therefore, is measured according to the proportion in which each particular one contributes as the historical means to the realisation of the pure religion of humanity. This not only agrees with the idea of the *Education of the Human Race*, but also became the fundamental thought of the Kantian Philosophy of Religion. It is evident that this standpoint of higher criticism combines with the freest criticism of positive religion a forbearing attitude of toleration with regard to it, inasmuch as the latter is in this view the historically given and indispensable form and medium of the ideal kernel which it contains. That this kernel is still found too exclusively in morality, and that the no less essential aspect of religion which consists in a view of the world is ignored, is a one-sidedness which Lessing shares with Kant and the whole of his contemporaries.

But the marvellously elastic and comprehensive intellect of Lessing supplies also the germs and indications of the manner in which this one-sidedness was to be overcome by means of the speculative philosophy. I mean that direction of his thought, which, under

the name of *Lessing's Spinozism*, has been so often the subject of debate. To me this question appears to be simple and clear, when regarded without prejudice. Though Lessing was by no means a Spinozist in the strict historical sense of adherence to the system of Spinoza, he was just as certainly such in the extended meaning in which Jacobi and those of his time employed the name. Let us hear Lessing himself: "The orthodox conceptions of the Deity are no longer mine; I cannot rest satisfied with them. *Ἓν καὶ πᾶν*—I know nought else." He declares himself unable to accompany Jacobi in his *salto mortale* from the world to the extra-mundane personal cause; indeed, the thought of a personal absolutely eternal Being, who should be unchangeable in the enjoyment of his unapproachable perfection, suggested to his mind the idea of an eternal monotony and weariness, which affected him with lively pain and sorrow. He shows in a special essay that he can attribute no reality to things apart from God, that things are much rather to be thought of as apprehended in God. All these expressions confirm us in the belief that his declaration was carefully weighed when he said, that if he had to range himself as a follower of any one, he knew no other than Spinoza, since, indeed, there was really no other philosophy than his. It is, however, also implied in this, that he knew his agreement with Spinoza not to be unconditional. He is at one with him in being able to think of the relation of God to the world only as internal and monistic, not as external and dualistic; but he parts company with him when he refers the relation of immanence to a representative activity of God. In like manner he joins Spinoza in repudiating the ordinary external teleology, as it flourished in popular philosophy; "we cannot without qualification ascribe to the Deity our miserable method of working according to purposes;" but, on the other hand, in distinct opposition to Spinoza and in agreement with Leibniz, he assumes an immanent teleology, an artistically harmonious ordering on the part of Deity, so that all accidents and discords in particular departments, still, in the organisation of the whole, work together for the best, and in fulfilment of the divine world-aim. That in which

he most distinctly differs from Spinoza, and agrees with Leibniz, is his pronounced Individualism. "That every one should act in the direction of his individual perfection" is what he lays down as the fundamental law of moral beings. The perfection of mankind results, in his view, only from that of all individual men, as the good of the community from the particular prosperity of all its members. And in order to realise his endless capacity of perfection, he holds that the individual is destined for an endless life, which he singularly enough conceives of under the form of transmigration of souls. Lastly, in common with Spinoza and Leibniz, Lessing maintains a strict determinism. To him the necessity, in accordance with which the idea of the best comes to reality, is much more welcome than the poor possibility of being able to act now in one way, now in another, in the same circumstances. "I thank the Creator that I must, and must the best," he exclaims, and declares himself against Jacobi in this point as an honest Lutheran. If we consider that for Jacobi the higher being of man seemed to consist in abstract freedom, as the true being of God in abstract externality in regard to the world, it is quite conceivable that a view of the world such as this of Lessing, which on both sides resolved abstract dualism into a mere opposition of momenta within an essential monism, appeared to Jacobi simply to coincide with the pantheism of Spinoza, that arch heresy in his eyes. In reality, Lessing's view of the world was a Spinozism vitalised and spiritualised by the individualism of Leibniz, an ideal monism. This was indeed, amidst all their divergences on other points, the common basis of the view of the world maintained by Herder, Goethe, Schelling, and Schleiermacher. But before we pass to these, we must study him who was mentally most cognate to Lessing, and who completed his work upon the critical side.

CHAPTER VI.

IMMANUEL KANT.[1]

CRITICISM, which with Lessing rested on the basis of natural endowment and general culture, was elevated to a scientific principle by Kant, who is thereby constituted the founder of modern philosophy, which makes man's knowledge of his own mind the point of departure and the key to his knowledge of the world. He overcame the superficiality of the Illumination philosophy (to which indeed Lessing also was so much opposed that he preferred even orthodoxy to it), by completing the critical mode of thought characteristic of rationalism. This he completed, by directing it against the positions of the metaphysics and religious doctrine hitherto prevalent, to which the popular philosophy had thought to hold fast as the last firm pillars of the temple of Faith of which the rest had been borne away. In completely destroying this whole temple of the old metaphysics, even to its last remnant, Kant cleared a vacant space in order to erect a new one on more solid ground; what he refused to include within the knowledge coming through the intellect was to be restored through the moral consciousness. Let us first pause to consider these presuppositions of his Philosophy of Religion.

All our knowledge springs, according to Kant, from a twofold root,—the matter of sensation, which is given us by means of the senses, and the *a priori* forms of Intuition (Space and Time), and of

[1] Three collected editions of his works have appeared: the older edition by G. Hartenstein in 10 vols., Leipzig, 1838-39; that by Rosenkranz and Schubert, in 12 vols., Leipzig, 1838-42; and finally the later edition by Hartenstein, in 8 vols., Leipzig, 1867-68. The references in what follows are made to the last.

Thought (the Categories of the Understanding). As these forms of our Intuition and Thought are only in ourselves, we cannot through them know things in themselves but only their subjectively-conditioned appearances. We must indeed assume things in themselves as the ground of all our perception, but we know nothing of them, since our knowledge itself, namely, our intuition in space and time and our thinking in categories (which are likewise subject to the Schema of Time), comes in between us and the things. Our knowledge is thus confined to appearances (phenomena), in which Being itself does not appear, but behind which it lurks hidden. That which underlies the phenomenon, the "Noumenon," is no object of knowledge, but only a negative conception or boundary-notion, which indicates the limitation of our theoretical knowledge on the side of this world of sense (the space-and-time phenomenal world), but at the same time reserves another sphere for the practical postulates. There is thus, according to Kant, "a deep gulf between Thought and Being which nothing can overcome; we cannot think, if nothing exists; an absolute being, things in themselves, are the condition of all thought; but *what* exists we cannot know." (Harms.) That indeed a *contradiction* lies here from the very beginning, inasmuch as if we can know nothing at all of those things, we plainly cannot even assert anything about their existence, and thus also the assumption of a limitation of our knowledge to mere phenomena, which rests upon that presupposition, becomes in turn uncertain:—this is a point which has with full justice been urged from time to time. There can be no doubt that this difficulty did not altogether escape Kant himself, and we shall have occasion to explain by means of it his frequent hesitation, in the definition of the thing-in-itself. At one time its existence is the self-evident presupposition of phenomena, as it is involved in the conception of a phenomenon that there must be something corresponding to it which in itself is not phenomenal; at another time he expresses himself so cautiously as to produce the impression that the existence of the thing-in-itself had already become in his view doubtful. Now he regards it as the positive ground of our experience and the correla-

tive of consciousness; again as a mere negative boundary-notion, which denotes the limitation of our experience in the domain of the space-and-time phenomenon, but can assert nothing whatever concerning what may be beyond this boundary.[1]

There is all the more reason, therefore, that we should submit the question, whether Kant's position as to the unknowableness of the thing-in-itself is established on tenable grounds, and is in full agreement with his own declarations elsewhere. Kant argues thus: Space and Time and the Categories of the Understanding are not received from experience, but are forms of intuition and thought contributed from ourselves to the matter of sensation, *consequently* they are *merely* of subjective validity; they belong only to our representations of things, not to these in themselves; therefore things-in-themselves are shut out from our knowledge. But what justifies this conclusion? Granted (a point in which the Kantian theory is undoubtedly correct), that the forms of knowledge form a part of our constitution and are the *prius* of all our experience, it is by no means on that account excluded as a possibility, that in the same forms in which we apprehend and think them, the things may also exist in themselves, and that thus objective forms of existence correspond to our subjective forms of knowledge. The impossibility

[1] These different sides and tendencies of the Kantian theory of knowledge an objective historical exposition has not to obliterate but to state and explain. In this respect, however, the Kantian literature of the day is seriously defective. Most of the expositors of Kant are manifestly influenced by the desire to make his philosophy appear more consistent than it is, and at the same time to insinuate their own views under cover of his; but while each constructs into a whole the side of the Kantian thought with which he agrees, and consequently seeks more or less arbitrarily to set the rest aside, the most diverse theories are put forth as to the true meaning of Kant;—a subjective mode of proceeding which reminds us of nothing more than of the false method of theology by which the Biblical writers are trimmed to suit each particular creed! A favourable contrast to the arbitrariness thus characterising the Kantians in general is found in the *Analysis of the Kantian Theory of Knowledge*, by Joh. Volkelt (Leipzig: Voss 1879), a work distinguished for its objective standpoint and acuteness of treatment, as also in Edward Caird's *Critical Account of the Philosophy of Kant*, a work which is esteemed as a standard work of critical philosophy by our Anglo-Saxon kindred on the other side of the Channel and of the Atlantic, and which truly deserves this estimation.

of a parallel course between the fundamental forms of the knowing mind and of being Kant has nowhere established; but on the other hand he has scarcely ever set clearly before himself the possibility of such a relation. Extremely characteristic in this respect is the alternative which Kant lays at the basis of his transcendental deduction of the categories, as if it were something admitted as self-evident.[1] "There are," he says, "only two cases possible in which synthetic representations and their subjects can coincide, stand in a necessary relation to each other, and as it were imply one another. Either when the subject is essential to the possibility of the representation or the representation to that of the subject. In the first case the relation is only empirical, and the representation is never *a priori* possible. And this is the case with phenomena in respect of that which makes them capable of being perceived. In the second case, however, the representation is *a priori* definitive in regard to the subject, when it is possible only by means of it to comprehend something as a subject." Similarly at the close of the deduction: "There are only two ways in which a necessary accordance of experience with the conceptions can be deduced from the subjects of them: either the experience makes the conceptions possible, or these the experience." In the preface to the second edition: "I may either assume that conceptions adjust themselves to their subject, and then I am in perplexity as to the manner in which I am able to have any knowledge of it *a priori*: or I assume that the subjects, or what comes to the same thing, experience, in which only they are known as subjects given, adjusts itself in accordance with these conceptions." As the first assumption would make any *a priori* knowledge impossible (and this alone has the quality of universality and necessity, as it actually is given, for example, in mathematics), Kant thinks that in stating it he has furnished an indirect argument to show that the second assumption is the only possible one. It may sound exaggerated and absurd to say that the understanding is itself the source of the laws of nature, and consequently of the formal

[1] *Critique of Pure Reason: Analytic*, sec. 14. Edition of Hartenstein, iii. p. 111.

unity of nature, while yet it may be true that the understanding through the categories is the law of the synthetic unity of all phenomena, and for that reason is the first and original cause of the possibility of experience in respect of its form. Here we at once see, and it is a thing which Kant expressly states, "that nature in itself is nothing else than the sum of phenomena, and not a thing-in-itself, but merely a multitude of mental representations." This necessarily leads us to ask, whether this complex of representations, springing up within the mind and ordered by the purely spontaneous activity of the understanding, is actually the objective truth, the matter of knowledge for science to deal with. Or is that not rather constituted by the agreement of the subjective order of representation with the objective connection of the things-in-themselves which is independent of us? Only the consistent idealist, who altogether repudiates the existence of things-in-themselves, can answer this question in the negative; but whoever holds (as Kant does from the first, in *both* editions of the *Critique* and in the *Prolegomena*), that the existence of things-in-themselves is the self-evident presupposition, basis and correlative of phenomena, can scarcely avoid the inference that the form of experience thus derived from the understanding through the application of its conceptions to "the multitude of its mental representations" can only claim validity in proportion as this subjective form in which the representations are arranged corresponds to the objective connection of the things themselves. Kant even appears to acknowledge this himself, when he says on one occasion:[1] "We find that our thought of the relation of all knowledge to the subject of knowledge includes a certain element of necessity, since, that is, the subject is regarded as that which prevents our experiences from assuming random or arbitrary forms, but determines them *a priori* in a particular manner, because they having to stand in relation with a subject are under a necessity to agree with one another in reference to this subject, that is, to possess that unity, which makes up the notion of a subject."

[1] In the Deduction of the Notions of the Pure Understanding, 1st edition. Omitted in the 2d edition (iii. 570).

According to this, then, it is after all the *object*, and that (according to the definition previously given) as "that which corresponds to the phenomenon while yet being different from it," and thus the thing-in-itself independent of the representation, which determines the character of our experiences in certain ways resulting in agreement, and prevents their arbitrary and random concatenation. According to this, however, it must further be admitted that the synthesis of the manifold in our intuitions rests upon the transcendental unity of apperception, that is of *self-consciousness*, which by setting all possible phenomena in relation to the identity of its function (and so not in relation to the noumenal subject) produces a connection of all mental representations in accordance with laws. How then are we to range together without contradiction these two deliverances, that the unity in the arrangement of the representations (phenomena) is based upon their relation to the object, and that it is based upon their relation to the Ego,—deliverances which Kant sets side by side utterly without reconciliation,—if between the synthetic function of the Ego and the definiteness and determining action of the object there is no sort of relation and correspondence? I see only one way to get over this open contradiction, namely, the assumption that the forms of the synthesis of the understanding exactly correspond to the forms in which the objects distinguished in knowledge are mutually connected, that is, that the categories, although innate laws of the action of our understanding, and not originally derived from experience, are yet *at the same time* valid for the things-in-themselves, and open up to us relations of being.

Kant's argument for the purely subjective validity of our forms of knowledge cannot therefore be regarded as tenable, for the alternative, on which he rests it, has evidently a *gap*; the accordance of representation and object is a possibility, even though the one is not dependent upon the other, namely, if the forms of knowing and being agree with one another on account of a common basis of the two sides. This *third possibility* is, for the most part, simply ignored by Kant; yet he has twice[1] made casual reference to it, but only to

[1] At the close of the Deduction of the pure Notions of the Understanding

reject it immediately as "most preposterous," since he was only able to explain the agreement which it implied between our modes of thinking and the laws of nature by means of a kind of "preformation-system," or "intellectual pre-established harmony," which, as an altogether external contrivance of a supernaturally interfering "Deus ex machina," allowed the inner necessary validity belonging to the categories to disappear, and besides, would "minister to the vain fancy of the reflective or idly speculative." While this accusation may not be without justice from the standpoint of a dualistic metaphysics, such as is supposed in the suggestion of an external preformation, it is still absolutely unfounded in reference to a theory which discerns in the laws of being and of thought the parallel phenomenal forms of the immanent spiritual world-principles. That Kant should leave this possibility, which was capable of solving so many difficulties in his theory of knowledge, out of account, is so much the more remarkable that he frequently elsewhere touches upon the thought of a monistic conclusion to his dualistic principles. Even in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, he points out[1] that Sense and Understanding "perhaps spring from a common, but to us unknown root," and that the thing-in-itself, which lies at the basis of outward phenomena, "may perhaps not be so dissimilar" to the subject of thought, or even (as it was expressed in the first edition), "may be at the same time the subject of thought." In a very special way, however, the idea of a principle of unity, in which opposites find their reconciliation, presses itself upon him in the *Critique of the Judgment*; there must be, he says here,[2] "a ground of unity of that which is above sense, which lies at the basis of nature, and that which the conception of freedom practically involves." In like manner the principle of mechanism must be connected with that of finality in something objectively common to both, which we are compelled to

in the second edition (iii. 135), and in the letter to Herz of 21st February 1772 (viii. 690).

[1] Introduction, Conclusion, and Paralogisms of Pure Reason, II. (iii. 52 and 289, cf. 592).

[2] Introduction II. (v. 182), and Dialectic of the Teleological Judgment, ss. 76-78 (v. 413-428).

think as a super-sensuous real principle having intellectual intuition, or as an original, intuitive, creative understanding (*intellectus archetypus*), even though we are not in a position to form any more definite notion of it. But Kant gets no further with these essays at a monistic reconciliation of his opposites; their complete elaboration was prevented, partly by sceptical distrust of the validity of thought, partly through the continued influence of the old-accustomed dualistic metaphysics. I may take this opportunity of directing the reader's attention to this important point, which will encounter us again repeatedly, and explain many a paradox in this philosophy of Protean variability: *The characteristic aim and bearing of the Kantian thought leads necessarily to absolute monistic Rationalism, or to recognition of the sole legislative authority of Reason in the Kingdom of Nature and of Freedom.* But in his endeavour to overcome the old oppositions by means of this higher standpoint, he himself is still too deeply sunk in the prejudices with which they were associated, in sceptical empiricism and dogmatic-metaphysical dualism, and these still exerted together and alternately too powerful an influence over him to allow him at once to realise his new thought adequately and without intermixture, in any direction whatever. *He remains accordingly with undeveloped tendencies, and surrounded with unreconciled oppositions still awaiting solution.*

We have seen that Kant's limitation of our knowledge to phenomena has no tenable foundation. We are still further confirmed in this conviction by observing the fact *that Kant himself is continually and in various ways breaking through the limits which he himself has imposed.* As it is impossible to deny that Kant expressed himself, with regard to the reality of things-in-themselves in a vacillating manner, it is no less indubitably certain that he never, either in the first or second edition of the *Critique*, or in his other critical writings, took occasion to deny that reality. He treats them throughout as the self-evident pre-supposition, the correlative, the cause, of phenomena (appearances), since these, from the very conception of them, cannot be without something that appears in them; "there must be something corresponding to them which in

itself is not a phenomenon, because the word 'appearance' already indicates a reference to a subject independent of sense." It is this subject from which the "impressions" arise, through which our sensibility is "affected," and whereby "the matter of perceptions is given" to us. But what, then, is this impression-making, affecting, matter-supplying, but just an activity or cause of activities? How, then, can we deny that Kant attributes to things-in-themselves not only *Reality*, but also *Causality*, and thus extends to them also the validity of the categories? And yet further. Kant speaks of "things-in-themselves;" but *Manifoldness* is not only a Category of Quantity, but implies also mutual exclusion, externality, and consequently *extension in space*. In the preface to the second edition Kant proposes, by means of the following argument, to make an end of "that scandal of philosophy and of reason in general, the necessity of assuming simply on the ground of faith the existence of things without us (from which we nevertheless derive the entire material for acts of knowledge even in respect of our internal sense): we are conscious of the changes in our presentative conceptions, and so of our existence in time, only through the relation of those changes to a something which is abiding, which is different from them, which cannot be an intuition within me, and so must be a thing without me. According to this, the persistence of the thing-in-itself can be perceived by us; but persistence is the time-schema for the Category of Substance; and thus the form of *Time* is also carried over to the thing-in-itself in the argument referred to. After all this, what can we say remains still of the alleged inapplicability of the forms of intuition and thought to the things-in-themselves? Let us further consider that, in the *Critique of the Practical Reason*, the use of the categories is quite openly extended to that which is transcendent: freedom is causality thought as unconditioned; the existence of God, as we shall see, is postulated in order to assist the attainment of the chief good, thus under the category of causality. And the justification of this transcendent application of the categories is there placed upon this ground, that they spring out of the Pure Understanding, are thus independent of sensible conditions, and stand in relation to

Objects universally. It is then just that lack of direct perception by the senses, which is elsewhere employed to prove their invalidity as applied to things-in-themselves, which appears here as adequate foundation for their transcendental validity! In this way not merely are the boundaries between the spheres of the validity and invalidity of the categories, or those of the knowable and unknowable, continually, in Kant's view, running into one another, but also the proof of the limitation of our knowledge to phenomena is of so elastic a description, that it is capable when occasion requires of being employed for the establishment of the contrary position. In such circumstances it certainly appears advisable, when we proceed to the further consequences which Kant draws in the metaphysical department from his theory of knowledge as a premiss, to proceed with a certain caution, and to endeavour to separate the enduring from the transient elements contained in them.

Notwithstanding this limitation to the phenomenal sphere, our reason, as Kant's *Critique* proceeds to point out, cannot avoid passing beyond this limit, inasmuch as it adds in thought the unconditioned to the conditioned. From its relation to the Categories of Substance, Causality, and Reciprocity there spring up the Ideas of the Reason—to wit, that of the absolute substance or Soul (as abiding subject), that of absolute cause or Freedom, and that of the absolute sum of reality or God. If now, because the Reason is under a subjective necessity of thinking these Ideas, they are accepted as also objectively true, and as such are constructively employed in the explanation of the world, there arises the deceptive semblance of a knowledge, behind which there is no corresponding reality. To point out this semblance of knowledge, and thereby to destroy the illusions of the Reason in the "things" of Metaphysics, is the task to which the "Dialectic of Pure Reason" applies itself. This criticism is unquestionably justified as opposed to the scholastic Dogmatism of the traditional Metaphysics, and especially that which had been developed in the school of Wolff; but that all Metaphysics did not share in the fall of the latter, and that in particular the theistic argument was not altogether exploded, is apparent from Kant's own work when

he rests that argument upon a new foundation in the *Critique of the Practical Reason* and still further in the *Critique of the Judgment*, the views put forth in which, as shown above, lead directly to speculative Rationalism. But while in these two later writings Kant correctly points out the methods by which our mind is raised to the consciousness of God, namely, by the moral self-consciousness and the contemplation of the world, his extraordinary derivation of the idea of God in the *Critique of Pure Reason* is, on the contrary, conspicuously erroneous. He starts from the disjunctive syllogism, in order to show that we, to attain a complete and definite comprehension of any object, must distinguish it from all other things, and thus must have in view a sum of all possibilities with which to put it in relation, and consequently must presuppose a totality of real existences. Now this systematic unity of all conceptions, to which each must be traced back in order that it may be exactly determined, can only be thought by the Reason, through the latter at the same time ascribing to its idea an object, or "hypostatising" the universe of Reality (the absolute Idea) in a particular Being, and then fully "personifying" this Being. It is easy to perceive that a derivation such as this is neither historically nor logically correct. At no time have men ever arrived at the idea of God as the most real of all beings by starting from the disjunctive syllogism; this idea of God is a purely abstract conception, which Scholasticism has the credit of discovering, and on the ground of which it certainly proceeded to infer the existence of God. But a mode of presenting the subject adapted to the teaching functions of the schools proves nothing as to the origin of the conception of God in the human mind. Kant has here, as Schopenhauer, not without reason, says,[1] "taken the procedure of the schools for that of the reason, which in general he more frequently follows." It is besides logically incorrect to say that we arrive at the knowledge of particular things by a continually narrowing application of some universal conception with which we start; rather is the opposite the case, that we begin with the more special notions, rising till we at last come to the most general of all. Even granting, however, that

[1] *Welt als Wille und Vorstellung*, i. 604.

the philosophical conception of the "Absolute" had arisen by this method of successive abstraction (although elsewhere it is always employed to denote the ultimate cause of that which is), it nevertheless does not follow that the religious conception of God has no other content than a personification of this philosophical conception. It is one of the injurious consequences of his abstract separation of the theoretical and practical reason, that Kant overlooks the co-operation of speculative and practical motives in the idea of God, and hence presents this idea in as *abstractly logical* a way in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, as in the *Critique of Practical Reason* he presents it in an *abstractly moral* way. Only in the *Critique of Judgment* the thought is suggested that there must be a common basis of the supersensuous element which lies beneath nature as its foundation and that which is practically contained in the conception of Freedom (the Absolute, that is, of the theoretical and practical reason) (see p. 153). To follow out *this* thought properly would issue in a position as much above the theoretical scepticism of the *Critique of Pure Reason* as above the moral Deism of the *Critique of Practical Reason*, and would present not so much a middle point of view as one reconciling through its superior elevation two positions equally extreme in their onesidedness. The true disciple of Kant will therefore correct the letter of the master's teaching, the discordance of which is shown by its very capacity of being set right, by means of the spirit of that teaching. Unhappily most of the "Kantians" (earlier and later) are like those disciples of the prophets, who clung to the mantle of their master, but were unable to retain his spirit.

It is an easy task for Kant to prove the Ontological argument, in the form in which it had been current in the schools, to be an illusion. He convicts it of a double flaw,—first, that the purely logical possibility of the notion of an *ens realissimum* is transformed into a real possibility and that thereupon actual existence is analytically deduced from the notion as one of the attributes implied in it, whereas actual existence by no means belongs to the contents of a notion as one of its determining qualities, but only designates a relation in which it stands to our experience, and can thus never be known from notions

merely, but only from the perception of the subject of those qualities in a particular experience. The fault of the Cosmological argument, which from the contingency of the world infers a necessary cause and finds this in God, is at once seen by Kant to lie in the abuse of the Category of Cause, which, valid only within the sphere of experience, is pushed beyond it, so as to add in thought an unconditioned and necessary cause to a series of conditioned and accidental causes; and further, in that this necessary Being is immediately identified with the *ens realissimum*, in consequence of which the Cosmological argument merely issues in a return to the Ontological. The same defects reappear in the Physico-theological argument, in which moreover the supposition of a thorough-going system of adaptation as obtaining in the world is unfounded; but even if it be assumed, the legitimate inference conducts only to an intelligent author of the world's form, —to an architect, that is, not to a Creator.

The result of this criticism is therefore that the ideal of the reason can only be regarded as a regulative principle applying to our knowledge of the world, not as a constitutive principle, involving objective reality. It is true that our reason is under the necessity of thinking this notion, as in it alone our knowledge of the world is completed; but still we must not accept it as objectively true, but only as a subjectively valid *Schema* for the application of the rule; "so to connect the things given in experience *as if* they were ordered by a supreme Intelligence;" we can make no use of it whatever as an objective basis of explanation for this order of the world. It is certainly open to us to ask, if an idea *can* serve only as a regulative principle of a true knowledge of the actual, if it must not at the same time be a constitutive principle of explanation, or a real foundation of the actual? If all true knowledge is genetic in its nature, every principle of knowledge, which may not also be a real principle and a genetic ground of explanation, can only be a misleading, external, formal Schematism. "The inductive argument itself can only be carried on conditionally upon the ideas being or becoming not merely regulative, but explanatory principles of experience. Every induction ought to place us in a position to infer progressively

or deductively, to interpret experience by means of the notions that have been gained. The bounds, however, which Kant sets to knowledge by denying that the ideas can ever be anything else than regulative and not explanatory principles, are never respected by the mind in its inquiries, but passed over and broken through, since the mind suffers no such bounds to be traced, but even in the inductive process looks forward to breaking through the bounds thus set in order to establish that as a principle of explanation which in the induction had been regulative and hypothetical."—(Harms.) Besides, in regard to this point, Kant clearly lands himself in self-contradiction. In the Prolegomena[1] he calls attention to the "remarkable circumstance that the ideas of the reason are not, like the categories, of advantage to us by enabling the understanding to cope with experience, but in this respect are *perfectly unnecessary*, may even be said to be *positive difficulties and hindrances* to the principles of the knowledge of nature formulated by the understanding.". Whether the soul is a simple substance or not is a point which may remain quite indifferent to us as far as the explanation of phenomena is concerned: and as to the idea of God "we must abstain from all interpretation of the system of nature which is derived from the will of a supreme being, because here we cease to be engaged with the philosophy of nature and confess by the very fact that this for us has reached its limit." What value then can be ascribed to regulative principles, which are not only perfectly unnecessary for the explanation of phenomena, but even obstruct it? To quite opposite effect is Kant's distinct declaration in the *Critique of the Judgment* that we cannot explain the adaptation in nature apart from the supposition of an intelligent principle; in that case the idea of God would really be a basis for the interpretation of nature and not merely of regulative value. How are we to deal with these heterogeneous utterances? The state of the case is this: The ideas of reason,—or let us say, more definitely, the idea of God is in one respect more than a mere regulative principle, while, from another point of view, it is not even this. Apprehended, that is, in its purely rational sense, as the

[1] Section 44 (iv. 79).

immanent spiritual principle of reality in the world, in which sense it is employed in the *Critique of the Judgment*, it is clearly the ground of interpretation, not perhaps of the individual phenomena in the world, but at least of the adaptation apparent in the order of the whole. On the other hand, the Idea of God in the anthropomorphic form in which it meets the practical need of the soul, and which, according to the *Critique of Practical Reason*, is an object of "moral faith," in no respect serves as a regulative principle for the comprehension of nature, but could only be a hindrance to it, because, to borrow words of Kant already quoted, the recourse to the arbitrary will of a *Deus ex machina* would take away the element of regularity from our knowledge and minister to errors introduced by fancy (miracles, etc.). The contrariety which plainly marks Kant's utterances as to the value of the Idea of God as an element of knowledge thus rests simply upon the ambiguity of this notion; which at one time denotes the absolute principle in itself as the object of pure thought, at another its representation in the practical consciousness as the object of moral faith. Between these two views the *Critique of Pure Reason* maintains an attitude of indecision, from which the *doubtful* significance of the Ideas of Reason naturally follows. On the one hand, the reason is under the necessity of thinking them, and they must to that extent be allowed some value in respect of knowledge; on the other, they are, as shown by the Dialectic, not objectively true; they are an intangible *illusion* of reason which thus deceives itself. But can human reason rest contented with this result? To do so would be nothing less than suicidal!

The issue of the *Dialectic of Pure Reason*, according to which ideas may be not only possible, but even *necessary* to thought, without our being able to predicate objective truth of them, is evidently the fundamental principle of the purest *Scepticism*, which would deprive us of the very possibility of knowing anything; for what criterion of truth and falsehood remains for us to adopt, if we must cease to regard necessity of thought in that light? But we would do Kant distinct injustice, if we were to take him literally in regard to this, and proceed to number him among the Sceptics. Scepticism was

to him a transitive stage from Dogmatism to Criticism, a standpoint, to get over which was the task he set before himself, and which, in his three "Critiques," he carried out with an increasing measure of success; but at the same time it is undeniable that a powerful sceptical element continued to mark his thought, and, in the contest with the rationalistic principle, made itself more or less felt. How truly, however, the latter principle was at the root of his thinking is most clearly demonstrated by the fact, that, in spite of every sceptical tendency, he recognises, however unwillingly, necessity of thought as the canon of objective truth, positively in the sphere of the practical reason, at least negatively in that of the theoretical reason,—negatively, in that he regards impossibility of thinking, that is, the necessity of pronouncing something unthinkable, as also an indication of real impossibility or objective falsehood. He expressly remarks that the Principle of Contradiction is valid for everything thinkable, even therefore for the thing-in-itself, and it is upon the application of this principle that all Kant's reasonings in the Dialectic, and especially the cosmological antinomies, ultimately depend. But it is manifest that with this admission the sceptical point of view is at once and altogether given up; if it be once conceded that thought has the right to posit as non-existent what it is logically compelled to regard as unthinkable, the right can no longer be refused to it of positing as existent what it is logically compelled to assert, that is, to allow necessity of thought to be valid as a positive criterion of truth. In the practical sphere Kant does this throughout; in that sphere he regards that which the reason is under the necessity of thinking as also objectively true, and not merely of empirical, but of *a priori*, transcendental, and so of absolute validity. If then the theoretical and the practical reason are in the last resort, as Kant himself says, one and the same, we must no longer credit the theoretical reason with the suicidal position of being involved in doubt as to the truth of that which is necessary in thought. And yet Kant exhibits the theoretical reason as acquiescing in the knowledge of its ignorance, and summoning the treasures of the practical reason to the assistance of its poverty.

While the theoretical reason is held to be debarred from attributing to the ideas of freedom, of the soul, and of God, any objective reality, they obtain this from the side of the practical reason. In the consciousness of duty the unconditioned appears as a practical reality, as a categorical imperative, which, specifically distinguished from all the mere conditioned motives of our action, constitutes thereby an actual revelation of the supersensible in our nature. Starting from this basis, the use of the categories—*e.g.* of causality, may now be extended beyond the world of sense to the supersensible, and thus we are enabled to speak of "the supersensible causality of freedom;" whereby all that was said before about the categories, and their temporal schematism, and their limitation to the space-time world of phenomena, is simply withdrawn. The moral consciousness of the law is itself incapable of proof, but is given immediately in us, and is thus the object of moral faith. But it forms the foundation upon which the convictions of the moral and religious view of the world are supported. First of all, from the immediate certainty of duty comes also, as a further stage, the certainty of ability, or of *freedom*, as the power of acting according to laws set before us, or of allowing ourselves to be determined by conceptions only, independently of the influence exerted by the phenomena of the world of sense, or by natural causes. "Freedom is the *ratio essendi* of the moral law, but the latter is the *ratio cognoscendi* of the former." Here, therefore, we have in Kant's own words precisely the case which, according to the *Critique of Pure Reason*, appears as an impossibility,—that a necessary determination of our reason is the manifestation of a supersensible existence, which, although not discernible, is yet known as an objective reality, and a real ground (*ratio essendi*) of our subjective necessity of thought (the moral law). In fact, we have here the essence of all speculative Philosophy; there was needed only the thoroughgoing application of the same thought to *all* definitions of reason, and the gulf which Kant had set between thinking and being would have been spanned, Nature and Spirit would have been reconciled by a union effected from within, and not merely bound together in a manner so external and mechanical as they are in the

practical postulates of Kant. We shall now see how the *Dualism* of Kant's theoretical philosophy reappears in the practical sphere in a new but perfectly analogous form.

The rationalistic principle, which had formed the impelling motive in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, comes into even greater prominence in the *Critique of Practical Reason*, though, in this case, not less than the former, it is unable to displace altogether the opposing principle, and remains, in order to retain its own special character, involved in a crude dualistic exclusiveness. We saw how Kant, in his theory of knowledge, started with the design of establishing the laws of knowing as forms independent of experience, and contained *a priori* in our understanding, how he expressly termed the understanding the lawgiver to nature, the source of the regularity of experience, but how he, on that very account, thought himself obliged to limit its activity to the *merely formal* working up of the ideas presented to it, and denied the knowableness of the external object (the thing-in-itself). Precisely parallel is his treatment of the moral law. This also must, in order to be unconditionally and universally valid, be independent of all experience, belong to the reason *a priori*, be *autonomous*. On its practical side, reason must be as free a lawgiver for action, as on its theoretical side for knowledge. But, again, it is necessary that this practical law, to retain its *a priori* character, should remain limited to the *mere form* of action, and contain no object of desire, as such an object could never be given otherwise than empirically, and could only determine the will through the idea of pleasure,—a determining ground which operates differently with different men, and belongs to the lower sphere of sensuous impulse, which cannot therefore lay claim either to universal or unconditional validity. All material principles alike, whatever be their contents, are, according to Kant, eudæmonistic, are forms of self-love, or the lower range of motives, have only a subjective empirically conditioned validity, and are accordingly mere rules of prudence, not pure laws of reason. The law which reason alone and autonomously imposes must therefore remain without the slightest intermixture of material impulses, which would only soil its purity,

and must be concerned with nothing but the universal form of action; its command, as a "*categorical Imperative*," is: "Act so that the maxim on which thy will on every occasion proceeds, may, at the same time, be capable of being applied as a principle of universal legislation." That so purely formal a principle is not sufficient to constitute the foundation of definite moral precepts, is both evident in itself and can be proved from Kant's own pages; for he evidently cannot, without inconsistency, derive from his own principle the two great classes of duties, that which concerns the promotion of individual perfection, and that which concerns the promotion of the welfare of others. The welfare of others is, no less than one's own welfare, a material ground of determination, an empirical object of desire, which rests not merely upon formal conceptions of reason, but upon the whole concrete nature of man. Nor does it tell in favour of the "universal validity" of the law, that only the welfare of others, and not my own welfare also, must be the object of my desire, or that *my* welfare is a worthy aim for others to strive after, but not for myself. "When Kant maintains the one and denies the other, he unquestionably contradicts himself. In drawing out the results of his general principles, he should have laid it down that care for the welfare of others was, equally with care for our own welfare, absolutely excluded as an aim of moral activity. In that case the one-sidedness of his ethics would have been brought more conspicuously into view,—the one-sidedness of the purely formal character of his moral principle, which made it necessary for Schiller, Fichte, and Schleiermacher to labour at supplementing and reconstructing it."[1]

A further peculiarity of Kant's ethical system stands in the closest connection with this. As the law must include no object of desire, the motive to fulfil it must, according to Kant, be no feeling

[1] Zeller: *Ueber das Kant'sche Moralprinzip.* In the Transactions of the Berlin Academy of Science, 1880. Cf. Edm. Pfleiderer: *Eudämonismus und Egoismus* (*Jahrb. f. prot. Theo.* 1880); and, by the same author, *Kantischer Kriticismus und Englische Philosophie* (Halle, 1881), where, with a discrimination rarely to be found in other works on Kant, the balance is drawn between the permanent and the transient elements of the philosophy of Kant, especially on its practical side.

of desire, no inclination, but only and entirely reverence for the law as such. Every element of personal inclination, every delight in the fulfilment of duty, appears to him nothing less than a subtle eudaemonistic defilement of its purity. He rejects the "moral feeling" as sensuous and leading to extravagance; hence even love has for him no moral significance; he even discovers in it a danger to the purity of the fulfilment of duty. The one-sided character of such principles of the Kantian Ethics is so obvious that it has since been continually remarked. Only the truth which lies at the foundation of this erroneous view should not, as so often happens (cf. Herbart, Schopenhauer), be overlooked. With Kant the dominating interest is to secure the unconditional character of obligation, the Ought, pure and simple, as against every kind of weakening influence proceeding from the subject, such as that in which every theory undeniably issues which makes feeling,—subjective sensation, always different according to persons and times, always a matter of taste incapable of discussion,—the ultimate and supreme source of morality. In opposition to this view, Kant is certainly right when he points to reason as the norm of the morally true or of the good, since reason stands apart from and above all individual preference, and is alike in all men. But here we encounter the limitation of the Kantian rationalism in that reason, both practical and theoretical, was, according to him, only to be discovered in abstract empty forms of thought, and not also in concrete reality and influences actually at work in life. He overlooked the fact that practical reason, in order to become a power in the world, is not bound to wait for the development of the "Categorical Imperative" (in which case it would scarcely ever become such a power), but rather that it long previously existed and operated as the innate rational constitution of man, which, from the beginning, finds expression in the form of rational motives and rational feelings. He overlooked the fact that the inclinations of our nature do not merely belong to the lower, sensuous, self-regarding life of impulse, but that there are also higher, morally valuable inclinations, such as sympathy, love, piety, sense of duty,—ethical affections, in which the voice of reason speaks to us instinctively, anterior to all

consciousness of the law, and prepares us by its gentle power for the firmer discipline of the law,—natural germs of good, to which all education must attach itself, and without which it would be able to accomplish nothing. Finally, Kant overlooked the fact that the aim of our moral constitution is not a virtue which is for ever involved in the bitter struggle between duty and inclination, but the truly free and beautiful morality, where inclination is reconciled with duty, and the good is felt no longer as a painful yoke, but as a joy-giving possession. And if we recognise in the latter the specifically Christian ethical standpoint, we must allow, with all respect for the deep moral earnestness of the distinguished sage of Königsberg, that his moral system does not rise to the height of the pure moral principle of Christianity—of course we here regard it apart from its historical wrappings,—but is related to it much as the law of the letter was, according to Paul, related to the gospel of the spirit—*παιδαγωγὸς εἰς Χριστόν*!

It is, however, to be noticed that this defect of the Kantian ethics stands in close connection with the analogous error of his theoretical philosophy,—in so peculiar a connection indeed, that it is quite impossible to amend the one and maintain the other unchanged. As formerly the theoretical reason was found to be too timid to venture beyond the formal conjunctions of phenomena or conceptions formed in consciousness in order to make positive assertions regarding external objects, because it was afraid of perilling by such a step the certainty of its *a priori* laws of knowledge, so now the practical reason is too timid to proceed beyond the empty form of action (the formula of universal validity), and to embrace the whole reality of life in positive significant precepts, because it likewise is afraid of perilling by such a step the purity and unconditional character of its *a priori* moral laws. And, as in the former case, the gulf originally established between thought and being was overleaped, as we went on, through an inconsistent extension of the legitimacy of thought, while it was by no means abolished ; so, in this case, the gulf between the empty rational law and the fulness of human life is concealed by means of inconsistencies

which, widely as they depart from the formal principle, yet fail to penetrate the entire plenitude of social life with the moral idea. In both cases, then, we have the unmistakable endeavour to secure reason as the unconditioned and all-conditioning lawgiver; but in both cases there appears the same powerlessness to carry out consistently the rational principle, the same stopping short in the midst of half utterances and unreconciled oppositions, an incompleteness, the cause of which is, as we saw, to be sought in the after-effect of the element of scepticism upon the basis of rationalism, further strengthened by the continuing influences of the dogmatic presuppositions of a dualistic metaphysics.

Yet even in reference to the significance of this metaphysics, a very remarkable distinction obtains between the theoretical and the practical philosophy of Kant. In connection with the former we have already seen the question emerge whether the correspondence of idea and object may not perhaps be explained by the supposition that the laws of our knowledge and the laws of nature, which is independent of us, are made correspondent by a cause common to both; but this possibility was at once rejected, because such a "Preformation-system" was only explicable through the will of a *Deus ex machina*, which would do away with all regularity in our knowledge of the world, and open the door to all manner of fantasies (p. 153 *seq.*). But it is very remarkable, and of the greatest moment in estimating the character of this philosophy, that *precisely the same hypothesis* which the theoretical philosophy had promptly *discarded* as a possible solution of the severance between knowing and being, is actually *postulated* by the practical philosophy as the necessary solution of the parallel severance between the moral law and nature, and postulated in the same external sense of a *Deus ex machina*, to whom is committed the task of mechanically uniting what in its inner and essential character is divided. The dualistic metaphysics of deism is thus, in both cases, the only mode in which Kant was able to conceive a transcendent bond of union between the autonomous but subjectively limited reason, destitute of power and reality, and the world of reality independent of reason. The difference is only

that in his view this conception, really belonging to the ancient dogmatic metaphysics, appears on the theoretical side an *impossible* hypothesis, because incompatible with the regularity of our knowledge; whereas on the practical side it appears as a *necessary* hypothesis, because it is an indispensable requisite with regard to the needs of the soul. There the rationalist in Kant triumphs over the dogmatist, but because he has nothing positively satisfactory to adduce in opposition to him, the sceptic has the last word as against them both. Here, on the other hand, the moralist casts the decisive weight into the scale in favour of the dogmatist, though he is still unable completely to silence the sceptic. And this is only too easily understood; for it is certainly a severe demand upon reason to admit as necessary, on account of practical requirements, a hypothesis which it had declared on the theoretical side to be not only unnecessary, but even impossible (as "most preposterous")! Such a demand would be all the more severe and arbitrary if its practical justification, from the standpoint of the Kantian ethics, were shown to be doubtful. That this is actually the case is easily shown by a consideration of Kant's deduction of the practical postulates.

The moral law is not identical with empirical freedom or the actual will of man as it appears in experience, but comes forward as an imperative, as a demand upon the will, and thus presupposes a resistance in man, which can only have its foundation in the fact that man is not merely a creature of reason but of sense. Reason, unconditioned in itself, is thus always restricted in its realisation by sense; the opposition between law and natural impulse, between duty and inclination, is an insuperable one. But the reason of man demands, nevertheless, perfect goodness; and what it demands must be also true; that is, in this case, capable of being realised. Within a limited period of time, and so during the limited bodily life of man, that requirement, because of the insuperable antagonism already described, cannot be realised. It can only remain that man, in order to the realisation of the unconditioned good, must have before him an endless prolongation of his personal life. *Immortality*, as being a condition of the realisation of

the moral law, is a postulate of that law, a postulate, accordingly, of the practical reason—an argument involving another kind of certainty, but one not inferior to that of any mathematical demonstration. Still, reason does not demand goodness quite unconditioned, and apart from all consideration of self-interest, simply for the sake of the law: it desires to have before it an object—to see something good realised. This final aim, the highest good, can only consist in the synthesis of virtue and happiness, in which not only does the law of reason come to its fulfilment, but the natural impulse attains that to which it has a right, the latter only, however, upon the basis of the former. But happiness is dependent upon nature, and man has no power over nature, whose course follows its own laws without regard to the moral worthiness of men. If therefore the highest good, such as is required by reason, is possible, there is no other way than that the synthesis spoken of should be brought about by means of the supersensible causality of a Being who, knowing the heart, and being himself holy in will, is able to judge as to merit, and, being almighty, is able to bestow happiness; the being of *God* is, as a condition of realising the highest good, a postulate of the practical reason. This moral proof is, according to Kant, to take the place of all theoretical proofs, which the dialectic of pure reason has shown to be illusive. But is it really more tenable than these? The relation above discussed of this practical postulate to the theoretical criticism of Kant has already given rise to well-grounded presumptions to the contrary, which are further confirmed when we put the moral argument in its favour to the test.

From the very beginning Kant's rigorism rejects every reference to happiness—especially to any material object—as a motive to morality, because the least admixture of a material inducement would be a eudæmonistic defilement of pure morality, an injury done to the sovereign autonomy and dignity of the practical reason. But in the end, happiness, as a constituent of the highest good, becomes again an object of the moral will, and reason, formerly so jealous of its spontaneous action, acknowledges itself incapable of realising the aim which is unquestionably set before it, and looks for

the completion of that wherein it is defective by means of an external and omnipotent causality. The inconsistency is obvious. If the practical reason has nothing whatever to do with happiness in the exercise of its legislative function, and is only rendered less pure by any reference to it, it is evident that happiness cannot, as a part of the highest good, be made an end, and cannot demand to be brought about by means of God. On the other hand, there is involved in the assumption of happiness, among ethical ends, the silent acknowledgment that the original rigorism was an unnatural one-sidedness; but in that case, the correction should not be supplied from without in a totally different connection, but should be stated at the outset in the terms of the account. Instead, therefore, of dividing man up into an abstract rational being and an abstract phenomenal being, denying to the former all content, and to the latter all reasonableness, thereby denying to it all claim on its desire, and condemning it to be a wretched sacrifice to joyless duty; instead, finally, of demanding as a compensation for such an unnatural state of things a proportionate divine reward, and so being driven at last to repair the flaw, assumed to be otherwise irremediable, by means of an exercise of divine power;—instead of all this, it would surely be more correct to start from the concrete unity of the whole man, as a being composed of both reason and sense, and to show how, in this complete actual man, reason is already present as the basis, how her ideal requirements are met by certain real instincts, feelings, tendencies and affections, and how, because of this, the fulfilment of her requirements in morality brings naturally with it a satisfaction of these highest instincts, a feeling therefore of the highest happiness. A morality thus proceeding from the true undivided conception of man, would never be placed in the position of having to borrow from the metaphysics of deism in order to the final solution of the conflict between reason and desire, between virtue and happiness, because it would find the highest good in the reasonable will, or, as Spinoza would express it (p. 61), because to it, not happiness, but virtue itself, would be the reward of virtue. The higher the place we must assign to this ethical view above the Kantian doctrine of a reward to be

sought after, the less shall we be able to ascribe to Kant's practical postulate, at least in its original literal meaning, any demonstrative value.

An attempt certainly has been made (as early as Fichte) to give the Kantian argument a more plausible turn, by saying that it does not refer to an external adding-on of happiness to morality, but that because the moral will is able to realise its ends in the natural sphere, because the world is adapted to bring about the highest good, the triumph of good in the world is assured through a supreme power. I perfectly admit that we have here an improvement on the argument of Kant, in which, when rightly understood, a useful and tenable idea is contained. But I must dispute, on the one hand, that this form of the thought sets forth Kant's own real meaning in the *Critique of Practical Reason;* and, on the other hand, that it is at all possible in this way to establish the reality of the God of deism in the sense which Kant assumes throughout his discussion. The issue of the argument thus modified is rather the speculative thought that the reason, which manifests itself in us as laying down the moral law, is ultimately identical with the absolute reason, which manifests itself in the oneness of the natural and moral order of the world. This conception is, however, as essentially different from the deistical God of the practical postulate, as it certainly coincides with the idea, frequently indicated in the *Critique of the Judgment,* of a common spiritual basis of nature and freedom, of mechanism and purposeful action, of a creative, intuitive mind. As we have already (p. 154) discovered in this idea the monistic conclusion which brings into view the solution (not, it must be confessed, sought here by Kant himself) of the unreconciled dualism of his theory of knowledge, so we in like manner behold in it the possibility of a true and more profound reconciliation of the analogous practical dualism. It affords, accordingly, a more satisfactory result in place of the theological postulate, so defective in the view of scientific thinking, which would be an entirely external and mechanical reconciliation, a "nail to hold together a morality falling to pieces," as Herder happily termed it.

But was it Kant's intention in this argument actually to prove

the objective reality of the transcendental God of deism in complete contradiction to his theoretical philosophy, or merely to establish the subjective right of moral faith to the practical ideal of a moral governor of the world? This question inevitably presents itself when we read what Kant, immediately after the deduction of the practical postulates, remarks regarding their significance in general, and in particular as to the "moral faith of reason" in God. The postulates of the practical reason, he says repeatedly, are not theoretical dogmas, have nothing to do with our will, with our knowledge of the world, either as a whole or in detail, but they arise solely from our practical need of "making intelligible to ourselves" the possibility of realising the moral aim set before us or the highest good, and therefore *they have their only significance in reference to our practical conduct;* they tell us nothing about the possibility of freedom, about immortality, or about the Being of God in itself, so that we might be able to derive from them conclusions valid for the speculative knowledge of the world. They supply us merely with a means of practical direction in the world, since they say to us: Act *as if* there were an endless advance towards perfection, and a holy Judge and Ruler of the world to confer bliss upon worthiness! This moral faith of reason is thus a wholesome means for practical ends, but without any significance whatever for the theoretical knowledge of the world. The theoretical reason, however, though it is not positively extended in its own special knowledge by means of its objects, yet deals with these at least *negatively*, that is, by clearing conceptions and delivering from errors: as, for example, from anthropomorphism as a source of superstition, and from fanaticism, which would fain claim to have a real experience of those transcendental objects. Such errors spring from the confusion of practical ideas with theoretical objects of knowledge: thus, for example, the fact of the moral ideal of an all-wise mind and holy will, which we require to pre-suppose for practical purposes, is changed into a theory of the divine existence in itself, in order to deduce further dogmatic inferences as to its relation to the world, its revelation, and so forth. Critical speculation guards against

such a dogmatic misuse of the practical ideas, by discovering the difficulties and contradictions that result from such an assumption, such as the conception of a Mind which yet does not, like ours, think discursively and successively, or of a Will which is not actuated by the need of its object or dependence upon it, or of a continuance of existence which is not in time. In this way theoretical reason shows that our anthropomorphic idea of God, however valuable and even indispensable for practical application, yet cannot be valid as a theoretical knowledge of the absolute Being or ground of the world. The conception of God belongs, therefore, not to physics or metaphysics, but to ethics. The pure speculative reason required in order to explain the reality of the world only the *hypothesis* of a supreme Cause, which must be an absolutely necessary Being, but the more definite determination of which remains quite problematical (because the inference from an effect to a determinate cause is always uncertain and liable to error), and can only be brought the length of a most reasonable supposition for us men to entertain. On the other hand, the requirement of the practical reason leads to the postulate of a morally perfect Ruler, because under this pre-supposition alone can we conceive as possible that highest good which duty commands us to strive after. Nevertheless this moral faith is itself not to be commanded, but only permitted "as a determination of our judgment, voluntary, contributing to moral (enjoined) purpose, and besides agreeing (?) with the theoretical need of the reason," as "something to be held as true in the interests of morality." Kant adds further that by thus grounding faith exclusively upon morality its purity is secured, since thereby the heteronomous influence upon it of the motives of hope and fear, unavoidable when there was theoretical certainty, is done away with.

It may readily be understood that this doctrine of the "moral faith of reason" has met from the first with the most various appreciation. By the philosophers it has, for the most part, been regarded as the weak side of the Kantian philosophy, as a descent and retrogression from his theoretical criticism, whereas on the part of the theologians it has been welcomed as that on which, as a basis,

a new dogmatism may be erected, safe from the assaults of logic, physics, and metaphysics. The latter circumstance may indeed be regarded as an argument, not against, but in favour of the view that philosophically it is a descent. Yet I would not wish to pronounce unconditionally in favour of this view. There can, indeed, be no doubt that this postulate of an almighty ruler of the world of nature and of morals who brings both into harmony, when understood simply in the sense of a theoretical assumption of objects as real, stands in complete opposition to the foundation thought of the *Critique of Pure Reason.* According to this (p. 152 *seq.*) the understanding itself is the sole lawgiver to nature, and through its autonomous action, namely, through the productive power of imagination, in accordance with the immanent laws of synthesis, first introduces connection and order into the previously chaotic matter, and so gives rise to experience itself. That a divine causality brings nature into harmony with our legislative understanding is there rejected as a most monstrous idea. Here, on the other hand, nature suddenly reappears as altogether independent of us; her harmony with the moral law, which is our own peculiar practical reason, is not admitted at all as having its foundation in ourselves, but is brought about by God as an external cause equally removed from both. Either, then, there is here complete forgetfulness of all that was formerly said as to the legislative function of our understanding with respect to nature, or there must be so serious a divergence between the reason as theoretical, which determines the order of nature, and the reason as practical, which prescribes the law of action, that it can only be adjusted by the intervention of a third element; but how can we accept this view, when, according to Kant himself, the theoretical and practical reason are, in the last resort, one and the same reason? From this it necessarily and immediately follows that this same reason, which, as practical, autonomously determines action, also and at the same time as theoretic by a sort of creative process builds up nature as the material on which in the fulfilment of duty it may work; and thus we are led *via* Fichte ("moral order of the world") directly to Schelling and Hegel

("absolute reason"). But while this influence was undeniably involved in the premises he laid down, it was never once drawn by Kant himself. In spite of all his theoretical idealism, he continued to be an empirical realist, upon the basis of a dualistic metaphysics, in his practical view of the world. In this way he saw in nature, from the practical point of view, a real power simply given,—a power which stood over-against the moral spirit and its aims as something so utterly alien to them, that it could only be brought into harmony with them through the intervention of a higher divine power. Had Kant but speculated further as to the manner in which this harmonising of nature and the moral world is achieved, there would have been only two solutions possible: Either both have been from the beginning of the creation adapted to each other—which results in the doctrine of Pre-established Harmony, which Kant, as we have already seen, had rejected; or, there must be a continuous series of interferences with the course of nature in order to secure, in each particular case as it occurs, the required agreement of nature with the moral world—and that is to assume the constant occurrence of miracle, a thing which Kant, as we shall see, holds to be untenable in historical events, and thus even in the world of moral faith and experience. Such are the difficulties and dialectical antinomies in which the moral faith of reason directly issues, *if* it is treated as a theoretical problem, as an object of knowledge.

But it is precisely in the fact that it is *not* so treated, and that Kant frequently warns us against so treating it, that we again discern the *critical foresight* which kept Kant from simply falling back into dogmatism. Kant is not responsible for the inconsistency, into which his theological followers have usually fallen, of regarding an assumption arising from practical needs as directly and in itself a theoretical certainty, as an objective truth founded on the nature of things, and of using it in the interpretation of the world as a whole, or of particular phenomena in nature and history. He constantly maintained that the moral faith of reason, as it rested upon practical interests, was only valid for "practical, moral purposes," that it only served us as a means of comprehension, as a compass by which to set

the course of practical conduct, and was by no means capable of supplying information for the satisfaction of our curiosity, or rules for the guidance of our investigations. If we only hold fast to this position, the doctrine of Kant concerning the "moral faith of reason" may, in my opinion, be put in a much more favourable light than would appear at the first glance. Thus understood, it contains a *demarcation of boundary* between the mode of representation belonging to the practical life and conditioned by subjective spiritual interests, and the mode of thought peculiar to science, directed, as it is, upon the object as such, and from a practical point of view indifferent or pure; and though the demarcation of boundary here attempted may not be in all respects satisfactory, it certainly contains an extremely useful kernel of thought, which is closely enough allied with the fundamental ideas of Spinoza's *Theologico-political Treatise*, and of the Hegelian *Philosophy of Religion*, to establish a claim, on that account alone, to serious consideration and estimation. Kant's doctrine of the *moral faith of reason* occupies a directly intermediate position between Spinoza's distinction of practical piety and philosophical knowledge on the one side, and Hegel's distinction of religious ideal representation and pure notion on the other. In common with Spinoza, and in greater measure than Hegel, Kant's doctrine strongly emphasises the *moral* element, the *practical* basis and value of the religious ideas of faith; but in common with Hegel, and more distinctly than Spinoza, it also recognises the principle of *reason*, which lies at the foundation of the *imaginatio* of the positive religions, and secures for them at least a relative participation in the *one* objective truth, and an indirect connection with the scientific comprehension of the world. Kant joins Hegel in declaring that reason is an element also in faith, and thereby claims for the rationalistic principle possession of the ground of religion; but that in faith reason does not appear at once in its theoretical, but in its practical form, is a declaration in which Kant is at one with Spinoza, and by which he distinguishes more clearly and more accurately than Hegel between religious practice and scientific theory. But it must be admitted that in his anxiety to guard it against the dogmatic

admixture to which it had been hitherto subjected, Kant set the distinction of the two spheres, in itself justifiable, in such an abstract one-sided way, that these spheres seemed almost like irreconcilable opposites, separated by a gulf which no bridge could ever be found to span. To this extent the dualistic philosophy of faith and the Kantian theology could appeal to Kant himself with a certain plausibility; it could support its position by the letter of his teaching, but whether it could also rest upon the spirit of that teaching may be doubted, when we remember that Kant himself treats the theoretical and practical reason as in the last resort *one*, by which at once the possibility is granted and the task is set, of finding some means of reconciling the functions of the one and the other, namely, that which is necessary and beneficial in practice with that which is theoretically true in knowledge. A philosophy of religion, which sets before it this critico-speculative task, may thus with much greater right describe itself as the inheritor of the Kantian spirit, than that which calls itself *par excellence* by the name of Kantian, and yet really substitutes for his criticism a pre-Kantian sceptical dogmatism *à la* Hume, Bayle, or Pascal. The best argument in favour of what has been said is Kant's own Philosophy of Religion,[1] which, in its treatment of the dogmas of the Church, pursues with sometimes greater, sometimes less, decisiveness the path of critical speculation.

It is in these practical postulates that we have the transition from morality to religion. Religion consists in the *recognition of all our duties as divine commands*. The difference between *revealed* and *natural* religion is thus indicated by Kant,—that in the former I must know a thing to be divinely commanded in order to acknowledge it as my duty; in the latter, on the contrary, I must know a thing to be my duty in order to regard it as a divine injunction. He who holds the revealed religion to be necessary is a Supranaturalist; he who holds it to be needless is a Rationalist; he who holds it to be

[1] *Religion within the limits of Reason only*, belonging to the year 1793, and *Conflict of the Faculties* (1st Div.) of the year 1798.

impossible is a Naturalist. He admits, however, a fourth possibility: that a religion may be objectively natural and yet subjectively revealed, when, that is, it is so constituted that men by the use of reason would themselves have been able to attain to it in time, but not so soon; so that revelation is useful and may even be necessary for certain times and places, although the truth of the religion may cease to be based upon it. And this seems to be Kant's view with reference to the Christian religion, so that he occupies a position very similar to that of Lessing.

Whereupon, however, does this necessity, even if it be only a relative necessity, of a revelation rest? This point is expounded by Kant in the first three sections of his treatise, *Religion within the limits of Reason only*, in a way which, in respect of depth, goes far beyond the ordinary rationalism of the popular philosophy. That which made Kant capable of a profounder appreciation of the religious positions was just his deeper moral earnestness. While the shallow and self-complacent optimism of the popular philosophy had as good as lost the consciousness of evil, as of a stern power with which not only the individual, but historical humanity, had to do battle, Kant makes the perception of a *radical evil* dwelling in human nature the starting-point of his philosophy of religion. It is, according to Kant, an indubitable fact of experience, that an original tendency to evil abides in the nature of man. Its ground cannot lie merely in the sensuous element of his nature, since it would not then be a moral evil, and would involve no responsibility; nor does it lie in a corruption of the moral law-giving reason, which as law-giving cannot contradict itself; the first would argue an animal, the latter a devilish, nature, and it is in a central position between these that the evil of man's nature lies. This consists accordingly in the fact that in the controlling principles of his action the moral and the sensuous impulses stand in an inverted relation; the predominance given to self-love over the pure regard for the law being "the radical corruption of the heart." If we ask now the reason of this fact, Kant explains that, among all the conceptions of the origin of moral evil, that is the most unsatisfactory which derives it through inheritance from our first parents,

since it stands true of moral evil as well as of good : *genus et proavos et quae non fecimus ipsi, vix ea nostra puto.* He can see, therefore, in the Biblical narrative of the original condition and voluntary fall of Adam, only the most convenient way of "making intelligible in a story, as of that which happened in time, the origin of evil in the reason." This origin in the reason, however, considered in itself, must consist, according to Kant, in a deliberate act of corruption of the motives embodied in the supreme principles, which act, as such, is without ground and incomprehensible. And it must naturally be so regarded in view of the abstract way in which Kant throughout opposes reason as a complete intelligible entity to sense; but when this abstraction is abandoned, when we recognise that the freedom of the reason consists in the very process of disentangling itself from sense, that pretended incomprehensibility of evil falls away with it.

If in man the foundation of his controlling principles is thus corrupted from the commencement of his empirical existence in consequence of the intelligible act of his freedom, the return to good prescribed by the moral law cannot be accomplished through a gradual reformation, but only by a thorough revolution of the entire mode of thought, by a kind of *new birth*, which establishes in man a new character, one susceptible of good, upon the basis of which a continual and progressive moral improvement is thenceforth made possible. The means by which this change in man is brought about is that the idea of moral perfection, for which we are destined from the first, is brought to a new life in his consciousness. But in no way can the ideal of a humanity well-pleasing to God be brought home to us more vividly than under the image of a man, who not only himself promotes the good by word and deed, but is also ready for the benefit of the world to endure all sorrows, since we measure the greatness of moral strength by the hindrances which are to be overcome. Not, as though the idea of a humanity well-pleasing to God were first invested with power and obligation by means of an example furnished by experience; rather has the idea its reality in itself since it is founded on our moral reason. Only as a historical

exemplar of this eternally true idea can a figure of so pre-eminent moral elevation and activity, as that of Jesus, be presented to us, and we can therefore so regard him *as though* in him the ideal of the good appeared in bodily form; which, however, gives us no reason to see in him anything else than a man naturally generated. But the special object of our saving faith, the "Son of God" in the dogmatic sense, is not this historical man, but only the eternal ideal of God-pleasing humanity, which derives its origin and its truth from our rational being, and of which the historical founder of our religion is considered only as the highest representative and bright example.

"That we are justified before God by faith in the Son of God," —this maxim of the Church must, according to Kant, be interpreted in this way: He who receives into his heart the ideal Son of God, that is, the idea of a humanity well-pleasing to God, and makes it the motive power of his moral life, may entertain the hope that this fundamentally good disposition, manifesting itself in actual life by a continual progress in good, will be reckoned in the spiritual vision of him who knows the heart as the entirety of a really good life, and that the failure in any special point will be overlooked for the sake of the general disposition; and in this assurance he may be free from every anxious care concerning either the past or the future. Concerning the past,—for in truth the past guilt cannot be wiped away by the atoning suffering of an outward substitute, since guilt, as the most personal of all things, cannot be transferred, but it is really atoned for through the sorrow entailed by daily self-conquest, and through the patient endurance of the manifold affliction, which the old man had indeed brought upon himself as punishment, and which now the new man, taking the place as it were of the former old man, to whom alone it belonged as punishment, takes upon himself. In this way "the substitutionary suffering of the Son of God as a satisfaction for sinners," which the Church conceives as having taken place, once for all, in Christ, is really in Kant's view an ethical process continually repeated in the inner life of every good man, an expiation of the natural guilt by the painful self-conquest of obedience and patience. As for the future, the consoling

assurance that the good disposition will abide unchanged to the end does not indeed rest upon wonderfully implanted feelings of supernatural origin, since to assume such would be to open every avenue to fanatical self-deception; but the immediate consciousness of the sincere disposition, together with the mediate persuasion of the strength of this disposition inferred from the perceived advances in good, occasion also confidence in the permanence of the disposition, which confidence, in turn, is the "Comforter" (Paraclete) and source of encouragement in particular instances of failure. Again, the Church doctrine of the devil being overcome by the Son of God expresses, according to Kant, simply this: that we must above all things be careful to preserve the idea of the moral good, which belongs to our original condition, free from all debasing admixture, and to suffer it so deeply to penetrate our disposition, that by the influence which it gradually exerts upon the heart we may be convinced that the dreaded powers of evil cannot do anything against it.

The individual, however, though well disposed, would scarcely be able to withstand the attacks of evil, which have their source in the society surrounding him, if he were left to himself alone. The supremacy of the good principle can thus only be assured in the case of the individual when it is also attained in the community surrounding him. This, however, can only be achieved by the formation and diffusion of an association upon the basis and for the promotion of the laws of virtue. Such an ethical community or *People* or *Kingdom of God* is essentially distinct from every civil state: the latter is based upon the laws of Justice, the former upon the laws of Virtue; the one is governed by the representatives of worldly power, the other can only be ruled by those who know the heart, since no man can infallibly judge concerning the morality of another. Finally, the civil state is always limited to a particular people and country, whereas the ethical community ever extends in principle and ideal to the whole of mankind. But on the other hand, the kingdom of God thus described by no means coincides with the historical church-societies; it is related to them as the invisible ideal

church is to the visible and actual church, as the pure faith of reason, upon which alone a universal church could be founded (only it must be confessed that, on account of the weaknesses of human nature, such a church can never really be established) is related to the positive creed of the church.

How then does the positive creed of the church, the "religion of public worship, the religion of ordinance" arise? The inner reason of its rise is, according to Kant, that men cannot believe that God desires and demands no other service than that of a morally good life, and that the fulfilment of all moral duties is itself the perfect fulfilment of their duty to God. Hence, in the founding and construction of churches, special ceremonial laws are imposed as duties of piety. That these should be regarded as divinely revealed is not indeed necessary, but also not impossible; provided that this ceremonial is enforced at the same time with, and in harmony with, the purely moral doctrine of religion, although only as the vehicle of its introduction, it may claim an authority as of a revelation, and all the more as it is difficult altogether to explain the origin of this peculiar illumination of the human race according to natural laws. The character of a revelation attaching to a positive religion is thus not merely conditioned by its moral content, but is also, this being assumed, admitted as a subjectively possible manner of explaining a historical datum, while as to any objective significance it is left wholly in suspense.

The positive creed of the church is thus, according to Kant, never true in the sense that it coincides with the pure faith of reason, but yet may be spoken of as true, if only it contains within it a principle in accordance with which it continuously approximates to the pure religious faith. For in this lies the *end and purpose* of every positive creed, that, while on account of the weakness of our sensuous nature, it is at least temporarily necessary as a historical medium, our indestructible rational constitution, on the other hand, requires that this historical form should gradually become superfluous and pass over into the pure religion of reason. "The coverings, beneath which the embryo at the first is developed into a human being, must, when

the time comes for it to pass into the light of day, be laid aside. The leading strings, consisting of the sacred traditions, with their appended statutes and observances, useful in their time, become less and less indispensable, ultimately become fetters, when manhood is reached. As long as the human race was in its infancy, it was bold, like a child, and able to combine with statutes imposed on it without its own concurrence some learning, and even a philosophy, capable of being serviceable to the church. But now that it has become a man, it puts away childish things. The humiliating distinction between laity and clergy ceases, and equality springs out of true freedom, yet without anarchy, because each man follows the law of reason, as the will of the Ruler of the world." From this standpoint Kant proceeds to judge both of the history of religion and the practical task of the Church at the present day.

The *History of Religion* has for its contents the standing contest between the creed of established cultus and that of moral religious faith, of which men, as they are now constituted, always tend to set the first highest, while the latter never surrenders its claim to priority. This explains why Kant assigned such a low place to a religion so thoroughly positivist as the theocratic *Judaism*. Between Judaism and Christianity he can only see an accidental and historical connection, not an essential notional one. He even descends to the assertion that Judaism was properly no religion at all, but only a civil government under an aristocracy of priests; for it requires mere legality, not morality, and it teaches only earthly retribution, and not one to come [this charge, already strongly emphasised by Reimarus, was so far met by Lessing in his *Education of the Human Race*]: and further, its particularist and political monotheism is not essentially different from so-called polytheism, which properly consisted in the veneration of powerful subordinate gods along with the belief in *one* supreme God. Since, then, the extra-biblical religions are all placed by Kant more or less under the category of superstitions (in regard to which he might again have taken a lesson from Lessing), the history of religion proper begins for him only with *Christianity*—a view which is so unhistorical as to be inferior to

that of ecclesiastical dogma itself! Jesus was, according to Kant, the teacher who first declared the statutory faith to be worthless, and the moral as alone saving, and who afforded in his life and death an example of it. But certainly this, his real purpose, is often and greatly ignored in the church, and that which in the beginning was designed as a means of introducing the religion is in the end made its basis. Hence all the fanaticism and religious persecution of Christian church history. But after all the centuries of darkness, Kant sees at length in his own time the breaking forth of the light, the free development of the true faith of reason. The final hope of the church, that "God will be all in all," indicates, in Kant's view, just this transition from historical faith to the pure religious faith, which will be the same for all men, and contains at the same time an exhortation to all to labour steadily and discreetly to promote this advance from the older point of view, which is, however, not yet altogether indispensable.

As a means to such a work of development, Kant especially advocates the employment of the *moral exposition of the Bible.* And although this may appear to be forced in reference to the text, and may often really be so, it is still to be preferred to the literal interpretation, so far as this contains nothing available for the purpose of moral teaching. For that which is historical, and contributes nothing to the moral, is in itself quite indifferent, and may be retained or not according to pleasure. Hence the sacred sources must be expounded by Biblical scholars according to the norm of rational religion. It is the duty of the State to see that able Church officials are not lacking for this purpose; but it is unworthy of it itself to drill them, or to occupy itself with their theological contentions. As examples of such practical treatment of dogmatic doctrines we have already explained his representation of the doctrine of Christ, and of the dogmas of Original Sin, Satisfaction, and Justification. There may be also added the signification of the Trinity: God is holy Lawgiver, bountiful Ruler, and just Judge, all in unity.

The last (4th) section of his Philosophy of Religion treats of *Religious error and false worship of God.* Under this head Kant, it

must be confessed, includes things which have been, both before and since his time, regarded as essentially belonging to religion; and whose positive religious significance his own conception of religion was too cold, his whole philosophy too abstract and dualistic, to appreciate.

Thus he regards the idea of the "operations of grace," as the church calls the blessed inner experiences of the religious spirit, as "one of those transcendental ideas which reason does not call in question with regard either to their possibility or their actuality, but which it (namely, the Kantian reason) is quite at a loss what to do with." It cannot deal with them theoretically, there being no means by which to know them and distinguish them from actual phenomena, nor can it deal with them practically, since we cannot exert any influence on things above sense, so as to bring them down to us. The claim to perceive heavenly agencies at work in our lives, appears to him to be a sort of madness, which, even though there be some method in it, yet is, and always must be, a perilous self-deception. Yet he also says in the same connection: "To believe that there may be operations of grace, and perhaps must be, to supplement our imperfect efforts after virtue, is as far as we can venture; we have no means to determine the marks of the presence of such operations, still less to produce them. The feeling of the immediate presence of the supreme Being, and the distinguishing of that feeling from every other, even from the moral feeling, would argue a capacity of discerning objects to discern which the human soul has no sense." And with this he returns to the thought with which he set out on this discussion, that religious fanaticism leads to delusion and is the death of reason, without which, nevertheless, there can be no religion at all, since religion, like morality in general, must rest upon certain fundamental principles.

In the same way does Kant pronounce with regard to prayer. Considered as a formal act of worship of the inner man, it is "a superstitious error, a piece of fetishism," being the expression of wishes with reference to a Being who requires no such expression, so that nothing is accomplished, no duty is fulfilled, by it. Here Kant is thinking, it is true, of that pathological kind of prayer, which thinks

to work on God and thereby to influence the course of the world from without; against such prayer, he observes, not without justice, that it is an absurd and also an impious idea to attempt, by importunate petitioning, to move God from the plan of his wisdom to do something for our immediate advantage. This is of a piece with his view of miracles as belonging to the delusions of faith. Reasonable men would never hear of them in matters of business, it would be a contradiction to say that that can be known by experience which we cannot possibly assume to have happened in accordance with the objective laws of experience. "If reason be deprived of the laws of experience, it finds itself in a magic world in which it is of no use, not even for morality, for the doing of duty in such a world; for we no longer know that the moral motives may not undergo some miraculous change without our knowledge, a change of which no one can tell whether it is to be ascribed to himself or to another, an inscrutable, cause."[1] A faith that can work miracles is therefore, taken literally, inconceivable; because it would be a contradiction that God should impart to man the power of acting in a supernatural way. If such a faith is to mean anything, it can only be the firm conviction that the good man is the highest end of the divine wisdom, whose wishes nature also, as far so they are really wise, must serve. Hence the only true prayer is the heartfelt wish to be pleasing to God in all we do or leave undone: the spirit of prayer which can and should dwell in us "without ceasing" is the disposition which should accompany all our acts, to do them as if they were in the service of God. The only end to be served by clothing this wish in words and formulas is that this may serve as a means of exciting in us again and again that disposition: but this ought not to be laid upon any one as a duty; on the contrary, the more the spirit of prayer is awakened in us, the sooner may we dispense with the letter of it. To public common prayer, however, Kant allows a reasonable significance as a "solemn ethical ceremony," designed to represent the union of all men in their common desire for the kingdom of God, and so to awaken moral motives in each individual, a thing that

[1] *Religion within the limits*, etc. Note ii. and note iv. (vi. p. 184, 295).

cannot be done in any more fitting way than by addressing the head of that kingdom, as if he were specially present in this particular place.

In the same way does Kant judge of the two great acts of the worship of the church, Baptism and the Lord's Supper. Viewed as ethical solemnities, he acknowledges that they have an important meaning: Baptism, taken as consecration to the communion of the church, imposes great responsibility and points to a sacred end, the education of the man to be a citizen in a divine state; the Lord's Supper, as a frequently repeated ceremony of renewing this communion under the form of a common partaking, contains the great idea of a world-wide moral community, and is a good means for reviving the brotherly love of the church. These actions ought not to be thought of as "means of grace"—that would be a heathenish superstition; it would counteract the spirit of the actions, and would simply increase the influence of the clergy as dispensers of grace and so promote priestcraft.

All such "artificial self-deceptions in matters of religion,"—so Kant once more sums up the fundamental ideas of his philosophy of religion—have their common root in the fact that men find it convenient, instead of fulfilling their moral duties according to the will of the holy lawgiver, to depend on his grace, and to seek by worship and ceremonies to flatter Him into favouring them. They prefer the cultivation of piety, *i.e.* the passive adoration of the divine law, to the cultivation of virtue, *i.e.* the application of their own powers to the fulfilment of their duty. The delusion of such a supposed favourite of heaven will develop at last into a fanatical belief that he is the object of special influences of grace; he will even claim to be on a confidential footing with God and to have a secret walk with him; and so he comes to look down upon virtue, and it is no wonder that religion contributes little to the improvement of men, and that the specially favoured (elect) are in no perceptible degree superior to honest men who make no such pretensions.

In all these utterances both the weakness and the strength of the Kantian philosophy of religion are conspicuously displayed. Its

weakness is that it has no perception of the peculiar essence of religion as distinguished from morality. Religion is not a part of morality, if the latter is understood in the Kantian sense of action according to duty, because religion is not immediately concerned with outward action at all, but has first of all to do with states of feeling which are the result not so much of the active relation to the world as of the passive, and with such representations of the imagination as lie nearest to the impulse to determine our position in this world. Spinoza saw this more clearly than Kant; he held it to be the aim of religion to exercise a wholesome influence on the affections, and the means by which it was to do so he saw in the sensuous images of the *imaginatio*. Yet in spite of his one-sided, purely moral view of religion, Kant did much to bring about a deeper understanding of its nature. By referring morality to unconditioned and autonomous reason, this divine element in us, he brought to light that root of the religious consciousness which is inherent in our nature, the source within the human mind of divine revelation; and it only remained to work out this new principle for the sphere of religion in a more consistent and thorough method than he himself had employed. What we have noticed more than once in the theoretical and practical philosophy of Kant, we here observe once more in his philosophy of religion, and this perhaps is the most conspicuous instance of it. His mistakes are no more than the natural consequences of the consistent application of the great new principle, which in its struggle with old modes of view could not in every instance establish itself completely.

The principle is no other than that of *pure critical rationalism*.[1] This is so clear and obvious that it might appear superfluous to say a word more on the subject, were it not that curious attempts occur ever and again to use Kant's philosophy as the substructure of a theological dogmatism which is positive from first to last, and therefore the very opposite of the rationalism of Kant. With Kant, reason, as theoretical, is the autonomous source of the laws of nature;

[1] Here, as in other passages in this connection, this word is to be taken in the wide philosophical sense, not in the more restricted sense in which it is used in theology.

reason, as practical, is the autonomous source of the moral laws; and any admixture of empirical elements in this legislation of reason would destroy its universal validity and its truth; and in precisely the same way this same reason is also the autonomous source of all religious truth, which is not dependent on any empirical datum, on any historical faith, but rather asserts its own superiority to revelation, even where using it as a support, and claiming to be a higher court, an ultimate tribunal. "For that a revelation is divine can never be seen from criteria provided by experience; what sets the seal to its validity is its agreement with what reason declares to be worthy of God. Conviction of truth is a necessary condition of religious belief, but the truth cannot be authenticated by statutes (declarations that they are divine utterances), because the fact that they are so would have to be proved in turn by history, which is not entitled to assert itself to be divine revelation." Thus Kant, in almost verbal agreement with Lessing (p. 136). He speaks, indeed, even more decidedly than Lessing: "To say that a belief in historical facts is a duty, and necessary to salvation, is superstition. For faith in a mere historical statement is in its very nature dead."[1] Hence also Kant does not regard the historical element of the Christian faith as that part of it which is necessary to salvation; what is necessary to salvation in it is the reasonable belief in the moral ideal of which the historical person of Jesus is an illustrative example. In the same way, faith in Scripture is not dependent on the problematical correctness of its historical narratives, but rests solely on the divinity of its moral contents, which, in spite of the human character of the historical narrative, entitles us to say "that the Bible deserves to be cherished, morally applied, and made the foundation and the guiding star of religion, *just as if it were a divine revelation.*" Hence, also, that interpretation of Scripture is the only true and authentic one which disregards the historical meaning of the words and attends to the moral lesson: for "*the God in us is then himself the interpreter;*" "the God who speaks through our own (moral and practical) reason, is an infallible and universally intelligible

[1] *Streit der Facultäten*, 1st section (vii. 382 seq. 363 sqq).

expounder of his word, and there cannot, in fact, be any other authentic expounder of his word (as in the historical method of exposition), because religion is a pure matter of reason."

These passages show us at once—and many similar passages might be added to them—that the rational principle has here attained such energy and self-assurance as neither to need the help nor to tolerate the restraint of an outward revelation. Will this formal autonomy of religious knowledge when it proceeds to develop its natural consequences lead to a material autonomy which will swallow up the last dogmatic remains of the dualistic metaphysic? Kant himself was not led quite so far: but he goes far enough to make it by no means doubtful to which side the balance of his thinking inevitably inclines. After a criticism of the pietistic doctrine of regeneration by grace, Kant asks the question: Whether there be not in addition to the soulless assent of orthodoxy, and the fanatical pietistic experience of supernatural agencies, some third and truer principle, by which the problem of the "new man" may be solved? And he answers: Certainly, namely, the *supersensuous in us*, which consists not only in the inner legislation of morality, but, which is the really wonderful part of the matter, in the *power* to do that which we should, and to bring to morality the greatest sacrifices at the expense of our sensuous nature. This superiority of the supersensuous man in us over the sensuous, this moral constitution inseparable from human nature, this power which in so incomprehensible a way is ours, is justly the object of the highest, of an evergrowing, admiration. Hence those may well be excused, who, deceived by the incomprehensibleness of this power in us, consider the *supersensuous* in us (being, as it is, a working energy) to be *supernatural, i.e.* a thing that is not in our power at all, and is not really ours, but is the work of another and a higher spirit. In this, however, they are greatly mistaken, because if they were right, the operations of this power would not be our own acts, and the power to bring them about would not be ours. The employment, therefore, and the constant calling to mind of the idea of this power which dwells with us, provides the one true solution of the

problem of the new man. And this solution is that which the Bible must have in view when it points to the spirit of Christ which we are to make our own, or rather, since it lies in us already with our original human dispositions, which we are to suffer to act in us. This striking passage is corroborated by the genuinely speculative definition of the relation of nature and grace, a definition going far beyond the earlier sceptico-dualistic view. His statement on this point is as follows: If we understand by nature the principle of his own happiness which rules in man, and by grace the moral disposition which lies in us, and which we cannot comprehend, *i.e.* the principle of pure morality, then nature and grace are not only different from, they are frequently in conflict with, one another. If, however, we understand by nature the capacity of working out certain ends by our own powers, then grace is nothing but the nature of man, in so far as he is determined to certain acts by his own indwelling but supersensuous principle, which is represented by us as an impulse towards good wrought in us by the Deity, the disposition to which we did not originate in ourselves, therefore as grace.[1] Here then we meet again, this time on the practical side, the same supersensuous principle, not originated by us and yet dwelling in us, which on the theoretical side was the source of the authentic interpretation of Scripture, and was called the "God in us." Now what is there to keep Kant from recognising, in this *immanent divine* part in us, an "immediate divine revelation," and thus the true object of that "supersensuous experience," which the pious regard as a work of grace, as communion with God, etc.? Would he not thus have found the key to these the deepest mysteries of religion? What keeps him from actually taking the decisive step, for which he has, as it were, raised his foot from the ground, is nothing but the leaven of the old metaphysic, which he has not quite got rid of. The dualistic presuppositions of that metaphysic were rooted in him so deeply that he could never regard revelation and grace otherwise than as the outward operation of a foreign power, a *Deus ex machina*. The speculative deepening of his ethical rationalism pressed him with almost

[1] vii. 360, 364, and 376.

irresistible force to take up a new point of view beyond the range of these prejudices: yet he never did so.

Thus we see exactly repeated here what we have already noticed on two occasions. Theoretical reason was still confronted with the irrational thing-in-itself, the unconquered survival of the *dualistic theory of knowledge*, which still makes it problematical whether our knowledge of the world is true. In the same way the practical reason is still entangled in an opposition, which it cannot transcend, to irrational inclination; and to enable it to get over its contrariness to nature (a survival of the *dualistic psychology* which treated nature as an enemy), there must be a supernatural act of power on the part of God (survival of the dualistic metaphysic). These half-measures cast doubt on the self-activity and self-sufficiency, in fact on the autonomy, of the practical reason, in the same way as the thing-in-itself does on the theoretical. And finally, reason as a source of religious knowledge and of salvation (the practical principle of the new man) is still confronted by the "possibility, and perhaps even the necessity," of occasional revelations and operations of grace, as a miraculous, that is an irrational, supplement to human incapacity; an untranscended survival of the *supernatural dualistic dogmatic*, by which obviously the rational principle of Kant's philosophy of religion is as seriously compromised as the theoretical and the practical reason were before by the remaining elements of the dualistic theory of knowledge: psychology and metaphysic.

At the outset of my discussion of Kant I said—and the statement has now I think been fully demonstrated—that the inconsistencies and contradictions of this philosophy may all be traced to a common source, namely, to the fact that the new principle, in the hard struggle it has to support with the older and opposed points of view, before it can perfectly establish its authority, is unable to get itself carried out in its full purity at any single point, but everywhere appears mixed up with the opposite principle which it is destined to transcend. If this be the case, then clearly there can be no doubt in what direction we must look for the true continuation and completion of the Kantian philosophy. These manifestly must be found in the

clear and complete fulfilment of its tendency towards the all-embracing empire of reason at all points. First of all, then, thought will extend its authority over being, absolutely and without any dualistic limitation; then the moral spirit, coming to an atonement with nature as the organ pre-formed with a view to its appearance, will take the latter fully and freely under its sway, and, satisfied with this inner harmony, cease to look for any external reward; and finally the religious spirit will become clearly conscious of the revelation of God which takes place within itself, and in this consciousness of unity with God will become at the same time so assured of its salvation, of atonement with the world-order, and of the fulfilment of its own destiny, that it will no longer need to look for stop-gap revelations and operations of grace from without, but will know that the kingdom of God is within us, and that his spirit dwells in us. But when once the divine revelation is found to reside in the nature of our own mind, the various sides of the life of the mind must be all alike concerned in it. Instead of limiting the supersensuous to moral action alone, we shall have to look for it in the intellectual and emotional sides of the mind too. The affections notably, which (as Spinoza saw so well) always play a principal part in religion, will call for fairer treatment than they have hitherto received; and imagination also, with its position as intermediary between reason and sense (as Kant himself remarked), will no longer be robbed of its due in religion. And the stream of the religious life once released will not only flow over the whole breadth of human life, but will also draw its silver thread in various windings through the whole length of human history. The revelation of the divine spirit being regarded not as external but as taking place within the mind, ceases to be bound up with historical events which took place once for all, and becomes instead a process of progressive development throughout the whole of history. Thus we leave behind us at the same time the mere irrational historical belief and the mere unhistorical abstract belief of reason; and in place of both we get the truly rational in that reason which works in history, and is constantly realising itself in history. And this insight will bring with it a greater *fairness and toleration* towards the forms in

which religious ideas have come to be clothed in various historical situations, and in response to various individual needs. Such toleration was scarcely possible to the pedantic moral rationalism of Kant, or of his school.

I have sketched in rapid lines the direction in which the Kantian philosophy appears to point, from whatever side we regard it. The more deeply we grasp its principle, and the less we mix it with other elements, the more does this seem to be true of it. How this tendency was carried further by the speculative philosophy of Kant's great successors we shall see in the section of this work succeeding the next. We must first turn to those thinkers and poets who were contemporary with Kant, but viewed the questions of religion from another side than his. The men I speak of were opposed to the illumination of the reason, and set up against it immediate feeling and poetic insight with its mysterious intimations; but in doing so they were preparing the way for the speculative self-knowledge of the religious spirit.

SECTION II.

THE INTUITIVE PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION.

CHAPTER I.

JOHANN GEORG HAMANN.[1]

FROM the last third of the eighteenth century onwards, the Rational Illumination, which up to that time had been the predominating tendency, and which had found its culminating point in the Criticism of Kant, was accompanied by a tendency of the precisely opposite character, which we may briefly describe as that of Natural Intuition (*Genialität*), and which developed a more and more decided opposition, and at last gained the upper hand. This tendency has its first representative—one, too, who was truly typical of the entire succeeding development both in its favourable and unfavourable aspect—in HAMANN, the fellow-countryman and contemporary of Kant (to whom he was six years junior). He was called the "Magician of the North," and did not object to the title; and he was a man in whom a rarely original and profound intuitive power was united with a peculiarly undisciplined logical faculty,—the two forming a strange mixture of genius and absurdity.

In his very first work, *The Memorabilia of Socrates*, which, strange to say, was suggested (at least indirectly) by Kant, he opposes with much clearness his own *standpoint of faith* to the rational illumina-

[1] *Cf.* Hamann's *Leben und Schriften*, by Gildemeister (Gotha 1857–1863. 4 vols.) Also Zeller, *Gesch. d. d. Phil.*, p. 524 ff. My Essay upon Hamann in the *Jahrb. f. prot. Theol.*, 1876, III. In the same for 1875, I., the Essay by Nitzsch, upon the *Significance of the Theology of the Illumination*, p. 60.

tion of his age and the philosophy of Kant: "Our own existence and the existence of all objects without us must be *believed*, and can in no other way be made out. What is more certain than the mortality of man, and of what truth have we a more assured and universal knowledge? And yet no one is able to believe such a truth, but he who is taught by God himself, that he must die. What a man believes, therefore, does not need to be proved, and a proposition may be proved ever so incontrovertibly without on that account being believed. Faith is no operation of the Reason, and cannot therefore be defeated by any attack from the side of reason, because faith comes just as little through arguments as tasting or seeing." "How the seed-corn of all our natural wisdom must decay and disappear in ignorance, and how, out of this death, this nothingness, the being and life of the higher knowledge comes forth as a new creation, no sophist can scent out. What in the case of a Homer supersedes the knowledge of those rules of art, which an Aristotle coming after him elaborates?—what, in the case of a Shakespeare, the acquaintance with the laws of criticism? *Genius* is the unanimous reply. Socrates could thus well remain in ignorance; he had a genius to whose knowledge he could commit himself, whom he loved and reverenced as his divinity, to be at peace with whom was of more consequence to him than all the culture of Egypt and Greece, and through whose breath the sterile understanding of a Socrates could, as well as the bosom of a pure virgin, be made fruitful." From this we may at once perceive in what an indefinite sense, a sense embracing the most diverse elements, Hamann uses the word "faith." Now it is the immediate perception of reality, the *most rudimentary* experience; again, it is a persuasion rising to the level of a *moral* maxim, like the assurance of our mortality, so far as it becomes for us a *memento mori*; then again, the *æsthetic* instinct, the tact of the artist, which creates unconsciously and involuntarily in accordance with the laws of the beautiful; and once more, in its highest instance, it is the *religious* acceptance of positive doctrines. All these conceptions have only one, and that a negative, quality in common: opposition to intellectual reflection and demonstration. In respect of everything

positive they stand wide as the poles asunder. This diversity, however, Hamann constantly ignored. Because, in his experience, feelings of a lofty satisfaction, the reality of which was certainly, as in the case of every purely subjective perception, an immediate fact of experience and therefore unsusceptible of further proof, were conjoined with certain religious representations, he maintained the contents of these representations to be a reality equally immediate, entirely independent of all intellectual thought and proof, to be simply believed. The immediacy of the subjective sensation becomes under his hand an immediacy—*i.e.* both an independence of proof and a non-liability to criticism—of the objective belief. And so the Socratic ignorance, which he opposes to natural wisdom as the higher knowledge, wavers between sceptical rejection of science in general, the rejection of the rules of art on the part of genius, and rejection on the part of those who hold by the faith of the church of a criticism of it from the side of the understanding.

What was justified in all this was the protest against the one-sided predominance of an intellectualism, which, in its abstract formalism, claimed the possession of all truth, while it was still far from doing justice to the experience of reality, to its individual manifoldness or its deeper inwardness. But this justified opposition to a one-sided intellectual movement became with Hamann and the whole tendency which issued in Romanticism, an opposition to intelligibility in general, a preference for the unintelligible, as though this were on that very account the higher wisdom. Hamann proceeds with gusto to pass the most sweeping, most disparaging judgments upon philosophy and criticism. According to him, they have only the function of a "schoolmaster to Christ;" *i.e.* their only task is by means of the sceptical overthrow of all sciences to drive us unconditionally into the arms of positive faith; as soon as the latter has appeared, "the handmaid is cast out," *i.e.* reason is to be no longer listened to. Philosophical systems are for him mere spiders' webs, products of vanity, accursed mechanism. Of Spinoza, indeed, he acknowledges that he stood before him as the ox before the mountain, and had for years laboured at him in vain; at the

same time he terms his philosophy an empty nut, a system of lies, an outgrowth of our corrupt nature, so frivolous, that it disgusted him. Hume was at least a good pettifogger, better at least than the Jewish trifler and Cartesian devil in the robe of mathematical light (Spinoza). Of Lessing and Kant he considers that their penetration was their evil spirit. Voltaire, finally, is the incarnate Lucifer of the century, and the Berlin philosophers of the Illumination are for him a school of Satan. Yet not only philosophy, but astronomy also with its Copernican system of his universe, is hateful in his sight, because it disturbs him in the devotion he enjoys in connection with one of his favourite evening hymns; and the results of natural science, which contradict the Biblical account of the creation, he repudiates as a vain fancy of the schools!

If any one, however, should conclude from expressions of so reactionary a nature, that Hamann finds the highest truth simply in the theology of the Confessions, he would be much deceived. The watchword—"Return to the immediate and the primitive" turns its edge as much against the interposition of the dogma of the Church as against that of the intellectual reflection of the Illumination. "Sound reason," he remarks on one occasion, "and orthodoxy are fundamentally and etymologically equivalent" (*i.e.* equally useless). "Our salvation depends as little upon conformity to reason or correctness of belief, as genius does upon diligence, or good fortune upon merit. Since faith is one of the natural conditions of our faculties of knowledge and the fundamental impulses of our souls; since every universal proposition rests upon good faith, and all abstractions are and must be arbitrary, the most celebrated thinkers of our time upon religion divest themselves of their premises and middle terms, which are necessary to the demonstration of rational conclusions. *The basis of religion lies in our whole existence, and outside the sphere of our powers of knowledge,* which all taken together compose the most accidental and abstract mode of our existence. Hence that *mythical and poetical vein in all religions,* their foolishness and irritating form in the eyes of an alien, incompetent, ice-cold, and starved philosophy." These sentences are clearly indicative of

Hamann's attitude with regard to his contemporaries. If the Illumination, and in a certain degree also Kant, had sought religion in abstract principles of rational thought, Hamann, on the contrary, finds its basis rather "in our whole existence," especially in the fundamental impulses of our soul; and in these depths of the natural life of feeling, which are anterior to thought, he sees also the origin of that "mythical and poetical vein," of that imaginative form, which is evidently as peculiar to every religion as it is incomprehensible from the standpoint of abstract intellectualism. In this, indeed, Hamann exactly hit the point in which the previous philosophy of religion had been unsatisfactory, but he betrays at the same time his own narrowness (and that of the faith-philosophers in general) when he considers that because the basis of religion lies in our whole existence, it lies therefore "outside the sphere of our powers of knowledge." Do the powers of knowledge then not belong to the entirety of our existence, of our spiritual being? How can anything that is based on the latter lie outside the former? Just here was and remained the fundamental error of the faith-philosophers, that while they justly found the basis of religion in the immediacy and central unity of our being, they thought that this excluded all interposition of the faculty of knowing (and acting); in this way they in their turn made the immediacy and inwardness of religious feeling and perception into just as abstract, untrue, and unsound a thing as their opponents had made of religion by externalizing it in the abstract formulæ of doctrines and principles.

It was not only in respect of the essence of religion in general that Hamann had deeper insight than the philosophy of his age, but also with regard to its history, at least that of the Biblical portion. All the rest were at one in considering the Biblical religion from the point of view of the moral religion of reason, and only diverged when they came to the question, whether, so looked at, Judaism deserved the preference, as Mendelssohn sought to show in his treatise *Jerusalem*, or Christianity, which, as we have already seen, was the view of Kant. Here Hamann shows, in his polemical essay, *Golgotha and Scheblimini*, directed against Mendelssohn, that the former point

of view was itself warped, and the conclusion accordingly of necessity wrong. Not morality, but prophecy, hope in a Saviour, a man of divine power and unique character, and in the ideal age of salvation which he should bring,—such was, according to Hamann, the characteristic spirit of Old Testament religion, which consequently forms not so much a contrast to, as a stage of preparation for, Christianity, which through the appearance in history of the heavenly hero was the fulfilment and perfecting of the faith of Israel. In Christianity also, what is essential and novel is not the loftier morality, but the higher benefits of salvation, which it brought to mankind thirsting for salvation: "The secret of the blessing that lies in Christianity does not reside in its legislation and moral teaching, which have reference only to human thought and action, but in its working out of divine deeds, works and institutions for the salvation of the whole world;" or, as he says in another passage: "In anthropomorphosis and apotheosis, the glorification of humanity in divinity, and of divinity in humanity, through the fatherhood and the sonship." It is unquestionable that Hamann here grasps more profoundly than most of his contemporaries the Christian principle of the reconciling love of God, and of filial trust on the part of man. But when he goes on to identify this principle with the drama of divine-human miracles and appearances, in which the doctrinal form of the Bible and the Church represents it, and when he proceeds to indicate disbelief of this historically-conditioned form as the special sin against the spirit of all religion, he appears to have forgotten what he had himself so well said about "the mythical and poetical vein in every religion." While with one hand he set faith free from its conventional propositional forms, in order to possess it as immediate feeling, he, with the other hand, binds it again only so much the faster in its ancient fetters.

The same inconsistency comes to light also in what he says upon Church and School in relation to the State. At one time he cannot find terms strong enough to repudiate "these public institutions, which, being subjected to the caprice of those in authority, are earthly, human, and, in certain circumstances, devilish," which, "as

creatures and abortions of the State and of the reason, have just as often basely sold themselves to both as betrayed them." At another time, nevertheless, he is not a little indignant at Mendelssohn's view, that the State, as an institution of justice, which can only take cognisance of actions, ought not to interfere with the religious dispositions and views of its citizens. By such a severance, Hamann argues, between disposition and view and action, between State and Church, the State would become a body without spirit and life, a carcase for the eagles, and the Church a ghost without flesh and bone, a scare for sparrows.

Here again the feature which everywhere lies at the basis of Hamann's thinking betrays itself,—his antipathy to any abstract separation of what in the reality of life is one. But while making this just protest against abstract separation, he regularly falls into the opposite error of an equally abstract unification. He thus overlooks in the oneness characterising concrete reality, the essential diversity of the moments, both in themselves and as they are held up for logical consideration—a method of regarding them which is equally indispensable for scientific investigation, and for practical dealing with things. And though there lies in this protest against the separating tendency of the method of reflection, in his preference for the *principium coincidentiæ oppositorum*, which he borrowed from Giordano Bruno, an undeniable kinship with the speculative philosophy, as Hegel indeed expressly acknowledged, yet Hamann so caricatured the truth of this principle (of which he himself confessed that he did not understand it) that all logical clearness and definiteness, order and development of thought, disappeared in his hands in a chaos of confusion. This inner indefiniteness and inconsistency, the consequence of his want of logical discipline, demanded, when he came to the sphere of religion, some firm standing-ground, which was most conveniently supplied in the traditional creeds of the Church. Hence that peculiar oscillation between the proud self-assurance of the man of genius and the helpless dependence upon objective authority, between a great-souled self-emancipation from every outward form, and again a small-souled submission to the first

traditional form which presented itself, and which was uncritically accepted.

Although these features are peculiar to Hamann in their most pronounced form, yet they are typical of what marked the whole movement. It springs from the very nature of the case, that the abstract immediacy of the mystical standpoint of faith *cannot* be maintained in its exclusiveness, that, in order to set itself forth, and put itself in due relation to other standpoints, indeed to have any significance at all for concrete life, faith must assume definite forms. Hence, though one may begin by a rejection and disparagement on principle of all outward forms, in practice any form chance may present will be appropriated without either principle or discrimination, and the whole contents of the exuberant life of feeling will be poured into it, even identified with it, so that in the end the lofty intuition results in a very ordinary subjection to the letter.

CHAPTER II.

JOHANN GOTTFRIED HERDER.[1]

HERDER was a friend of Hamann, and received from him many a stimulating and fruitful thought; yet it would be wholly misleading to range Herder's clear and lofty mind, in which philosophy and history stood in such intimate union, alongside that obscure mystic, that foe of reason and philosophy. Herder indeed cannot be placed among the "faith-philosophers" without some qualification. What he has in common with them is no more than that general antagonism in which the movement exalting genius stood to the Illumination, and the emphasis laid upon immediate experience, as the ultimate source of *all* knowledge of the truth, a source of *actual* knowledge of the truth, of reality itself. But while this movement, in those who had hitherto represented it, the mystics as well as the impetuous ("Sturm und Drang") spirits, resembled only a dull flame, which sent out more smoke than light, it was Herder's epoch-making achievement to combine this tendency with many-sided historical and philosophical discipline, and thereby to make it for the first time a beneficial and active factor in the development of German culture. The Bible and Plato, Bacon, Hume and Shaftesbury, Spinoza, Leibniz, Montesquieu and Rousseau, all contributed so much to the stores of Herder's universal cultivation, that it is difficult to say which side had the predominance.

It cannot be doubted; however, that it was Rousseau who exer-

[1] R. Haym: *Herder nach seinem Leben und seinen Werken;* Berlin, 1880 (only vol. i.) Charles Joret: *Herder et la Renaissance littéraire en Allemagne;* Paris, 1875. A. Werner: *Herder als Theolog;* Berlin, 1871. Otto Pfleiderer: *Herder und Kant;* Prot. *Jahrb.* 1875, iv.

cised the most decisive influence upon the tendency of Herder's mind. While still a student at Königsberg he was directed to Rousseau by Kant, and for long years he occupied himself with him uninterruptedly, revelled in him and raved about him, and under his guidance discovered himself, his own genius. Yet his relation to Rousseau was by no means one of dependence and discipleship. Rousseau's summons to go back to nature, to the origins of humanity, which in his own case had an essentially social and political tendency, was for Herder transformed into the *scientific inquiry into the origins and development of human civilisation, speech, poetry, and religion.* It was thus he became the founder of modern linguistic, religious, and historical science, which is distinguished from the abstract rationalistic method of the eighteenth century by the *realistic* sense of what was characteristic of every period and mode of thought, setting *positive genetic* comprehension in the place of a merely negative criticism. How far this comprehension was successful in its dealings with various departments of knowledge, is a question by itself, which would have to be specially gone into with respect to every one of the departments at which he worked; and it is plainly to be anticipated that a first attempt at such investigations must be marked by numerous defects. But the epoch-making significance of the principle itself which Herder introduced into the science of history is quite independent of such success; and I myself have no doubt that this epoch-making significance of Herder's has hitherto been decidedly under-estimated among us Germans, because we in our school-pedantry are accustomed to value only what is formulated and systematized, and that certainly could not be said of Herder's thinking. It is time for us no longer to suffer ourselves to be put to shame in this matter by the French,[1] but to begin ourselves to perceive that the specific advantages of nineteenth century science over that of the eighteenth never could have sprung only from Kant's

[1] Joret remarks, in the preface to his suggestive monograph upon Herder, that this "renowned thinker" is the only one of all the great writers beyond the Rhine who has found no biographer, and is of opinion that he is too lightly esteemed by his countrymen.

sceptical Idealism, empty of contents as it was, but that with it, in equal measure, that historical realism co-operated, which was represented mainly, though not exclusively, by Herder, and through him brought to bear on scientific studies. Strauss well remarks (in his monograph on Reimarus, p. 280): "The man who first opened up to us a better understanding of the East, Herder, was at the same time one of the first of those who broke through the bonds of the eighteenth century and prepared the way for the nineteenth." His apprehension of Nature as a history of the earth, of a process of development, in which an ever more elaborate and more highly organised individual life takes shape, is the precursor not only of the nature-philosophy of Schelling and Oken, but also of all the theories of descent and evolution, with which the natural science of the present day is concerned. And his view of history as a continuation of the natural history of life upon the earth, as a process of development, in which the highest product of nature, namely man, becomes in his turn the creator of a new and higher nature, the world of freedom, civilisation, culture—in short, of humanity—is the precursor of the Hegelian philosophy of history, which has thrown new light not only upon the study of history as such, but even more upon the estimate to be placed on all the great historical forces of humanity. If we compare, just by way of example, the Hegelian philosophy of religion, and its beautifully suggestive characterisation of the historical religions, with that of Kant, which measures all religions alike by the *one* standard of the moral religion of reason, and thereupon pronounces all, with the exception of the Christian religion—and it in a mutilated form—to be vain superstitions, the gulf which separates them is so immense that the question must be forced upon every one not entirely cast in the mould of this particular school, whether this advance beyond the Kantian limits does not necessitate for its explanation another factor of an essentially different character, in addition to the Kantian philosophy. Such a factor do we find in the universal realism of Herder, and particularly in his philosophy of history, which again stands in a positive relation to Lessing and Leibniz, while negatively occasioned by Rousseau's gospel of nature

with its enmity to culture, as well as by the sceptical naturalism of Hume.

This manifold indebtedness by no means compromises the high, epoch-making significance of Herder. His significance indeed lies just in this: that all the various elements and tendencies pointing to a new positive view of the world, as they were indicated by Spinoza and Leibniz, by Rousseau and Lessing, were by him not merely gathered into an external combination, but worked into a genuine inner union, and so united became the moments of a new tendency of thought. And although this union, as may easily be understood, is in particular points still somewhat undefined and nebulous, yet, taken as a whole, it formed a very distinct positive principle of a mode of thought specifically different both from the Illumination and from the dogmatism of an earlier time—a principle which only required a soil cleared from the old rubbish and weeds, in order to grow as a fruitful seed of a new world of ideas. And this clearance of the ground was accomplished by the "destroyer" Kant. Thus Herder comes to supplement Kant and his negative conclusions, forming the positive link which connects the older and the newer modes of thought.

Thus the association of Spinozism with the profounder spirit of the Leibnizian monadology, for which indeed the way was prepared by Lessing, but which was first definitely accomplished by Herder, was an achievement, the extent of whose influence upon our development in culture can scarcely be exaggerated. Let us hear what Herder himself says. He writes to Jacobi (1784): "At last I seize an hour to write to you nothing but ἓν καὶ πᾶν—a motto which I once read in Gleim's garden-house, where Lessing had written it, but did not yet know how to explain, that is, to explain it by the soul of Lessing; for his good-hearted maidenliness has, probably only from a kind of shame and forbearance, said nothing of all these blasphemies. Seven times I would have written my ἓν καὶ πᾶν underneath it, having so unexpectedly found in Lessing a fellow-believer in my philosophical *credo*. Seriously, dear Jacobi, since I have been busied with philosophy, I am always, and every time

freshly, convinced of the truth of Lessing's dictum, that really the philosophy of Spinoza alone is quite consistent with itself. Not as though I subscribed to it unreservedly, for even Spinoza has undeveloped notions, when Descartes, upon whom he moulded himself entirely, stood too close to him. Thus I would never give the name of Spinozism to my system, for the germs of it lie almost more pure in the oldest of all enlightened nations; but Spinoza was the first who had the courage to combine them, according to our method, into a system, but at the same time had the misfortune to turn outwards its roughest sides and acutest angles, whereby he brought it into discredit with Jews, heathens, and Christians. Mendelssohn correctly said that Bayle misunderstood Spinoza's system; at any rate he did him great injury by means of coarse comparisons. So I am of opinion that since Spinoza's death no one has done justice to the system of ἓν καὶ πᾶν. O why did not Lessing do it! Wicked death overtook him! . . . The first error, the πρῶτον ψεῦδος, dear Jacobi, in your and in every anti-Spinozist system is this: that God, the great Being of all beings, is a nullity—an abstract notion. But according to Spinoza he is not that; he is the most real and most active Unity, who alone says to himself, 'I am that I am, and will be, in all the variations of my appearances, what I will be.' What you, dear folks, mean by your 'existence apart from the world,' I cannot comprehend. If God does not exist in the world, everywhere in the world, and indeed everywhere without measure, whole and indivisible, he exists nowhere. Apart from the world there is no space; space comes into existence only when for us a world comes into existence, as an abstraction from the phenomenal. Limited personality is all the less applicable to the infinite Being, that in our case personality only comes through limitation. In God this illusion falls away; he is the highest, most living, most active unity." Further: "God is certainly apart from thee, and works in and through all creatures (the extramundane God I know not); but what shall God be to thee unless he is in thee, and thou feelest and perceivest his presence in an infinitely intimate manner, and he recognises himself also as in one organ out of his thousand million organs. Thou

wouldst have God in the likeness of man, as a friend, who thinks upon thee. Consider, that in that case he must think in a human, that is, limited, way upon thee, and if he is favourable to thee, must be unfavourable to others. Tell me, then, why he is necessary to thee in the likeness of man? He speaks to thee, he works upon thee, by means of all noble human forms who were his instruments, and above all, through the instrument of instruments, his only-Begotten. But even through him only as an instrument, in so far as he was a mortal man. In order to taste the divinity in him thou must thyself become a man of God, *i.e.* there must be that in thee which can become participant in his nature. Thou thus enjoyest God only and always according to thine own inmost nature; and thus he is unchangeably and indefeasibly in thee as a fountain and root of this most spiritual enduring existence. That is the doctrine of Christ and Moses, and of all the apostles and prophets, though variously expressed according to the times at which they lived, and according to the extent and depth of each individual's capacity for knowledge, and susceptibility for enjoyment. If this peace of God in the heart of a single being to whom he imparts himself is higher than all reason, how infinitely higher must it be in Him, who is the heart of all hearts, the highest conception of all kinds of representation, the most intimate enjoyment of all kinds of enjoyment, which have in him their source, root, sum, end, and centre! If thou makest of this inmost, highest notion, comprehending all in one, a mere empty name, it is thou that art an atheist, not Spinoza; according to him, it is the Being of beings, Jehovah. I must tell you that this philosophy makes me very happy. For it is the only one which combines all representations and systems. Goethe has read Spinoza, and it is to me a great confirmation that he has understood him precisely as I do." Further: "With the personal supra-mundane and extra-mundane God I, no more than Lessing, can get along. God is not the world, and the world is not God; that is quite certain. But, as far as I can see, this 'extra' and 'supra' do not improve it. When one speaks of God, all idols of space and time must be forgotten, or our best labour is in vain." "Let us banish from the thought of God the

personal qualities which always lead, if not to something false (as though he played a part), at least to something peculiar (as if he sustained a character), consequently away from the pure notion of a wholly incomparable Being and Truth."

From what has now been said, it is evident that Herder's idea of God, notwithstanding the emphasis laid upon his absoluteness and immanence in the world, is yet very different from Spinoza's idea of substance. This difference is more definitely explained by Herder in his treatise: *God: some Discourses upon the System of Spinoza* (1st ed. 1787; 2d, 1800).[1] He finds its fundamental defect in this, that the notions of substance, attributes, modes, matter, borrowed from the mechanical natural philosophy of the Cartesian school, as notions of lifeless extension, co-ordinate with thought, had always something rigid, abstract, formal about them, and that this was made still worse by the method of mathematical demonstration. In this form they were adapted neither to explain reality, nor to satisfy the human heart. It was therefore requisite to give life to these conceptions by means of the (Leibnizian) notion of "Force." Instead of being thought of merely as infinite being or substance, he must be regarded as "the self-dependent, original, and almighty force, the basis and aggregate of all forces, as operative being;" his attributes must be considered as the organic forces, in which, taken all together, the one divinity is revealed, and all things as the modifications or operative expressions of the divine power. Moreover, he brings into notice as against a crude pantheistic view, which would out-and-out identify the infinite with the finite, the essential distinction which exists between the infinite in itself, the absolute of reason, and the merely endless in space and time, the infinite of imagination;—a thought, the truth of which Hegel afterwards more definitely carried out, but which, in the case of Spinoza, was perhaps rather imported into his system than really to be found there. As the eternal primitive force God possesses infinite power of thought as well as of action, or with him existence, activity, and thought are inseparably united. Hence he is equally removed from "blind necessity," and from all mere

[1] Works, *Phil. and Hist.*, vol. ix.

(ineffectual) "consideration and deliberation, caprice and wish (Velleitat);" for which man-like attributes Leibniz, in his *Theodicy*, had improperly made room in deference to the popular mode of representing divinity. What with Leibniz himself was only the form in which he clothed his thought, or mere matter of accommodation, his disciples raised to the chief place. "What a crowd of Theodicies, Teleologies, Physico-Theologies, have been constructed upon this (moral) 'adaptation,' which not only ascribed to the supreme being very narrow and weak designs, but at length went in the direction of making everything the arbitrary caprice of God, and destroying the golden chain of nature, in order to isolate in it a few events, so that just here and there may appear an electric spark of arbitrary divine purpose. I confess that is not my philosophy. When we *a priori* introduce particular purposes of God into the creation, upon what a path of misleading hypotheses are we venturing, which for the most part are the next day exploded! All these blunders, in connection with which one ought not to abuse the sacred name of God, are avoided by the modest inquirer into nature, who announces to us indeed no special designs from the divine council-chamber, but investigates the nature and relations of the objects themselves, and points to the laws essentially implanted in them. He seeks and finds, even while he appears to have left the divine purposes out of sight, in every point and portion of the creation the whole of God, that is, in every object a truth, harmony, and beauty essential to it, without which it would not and could not be. He who could show me the laws of nature, how according to an inner necessity from the combination of active forces in such and no other organs, our phenomena of the so-called animate and inanimate creation operate, live, and act, would call forth in me an admiration, love, and reverence of God far more than one who should declare to me from the divine council-chamber that our feet are for walking, our eyes for seeing, etc. Every true law of nature discovered would be at the same time a discovered rule of the eternal divine mind, which could only think truth and work reality."

We thus see how Herder agrees with Spinoza in rejecting every

external teleology, "which would make everything the arbitrary caprice of God, and destroy the golden chain of nature, in order to isolate a few events in it as results of arbitrary divine purposes;" but how, on the other hand, he agrees with Leibniz in recognising in the necessary connection of things also an inner design and harmony, and in the laws of nature the forms of the true divine thinking, the reason immanent in the order of the world. In this combination of Spinozistic necessity and Leibnizian teleology there was laid down the principle of the modern study of nature,[1] upon which Goethe, Schelling, and Humboldt proceeded, and to which the controversies of the natural science of to-day must always in the last resort return.

In this mighty and comprehensive world-view, the completest and maturest statement of which is to be found in the work, *Ideas on the Philosophy of History*, a work truly to be described as sparkling with genius, nature and history became for Herder joined in the unity of a cosmical process of development, in which, from first to last, the same laws are operative, only in various degrees and forms. Nature appears as the history of the development of the organising force, which brings forth from itself the distinctions of genera and species, and ascends by a successive scale of organisations from the crystal to the plant, to the animal, to man. Man, however, is the link between two worlds; having his root in the earth, as the highest of her organic productions, he reaches at the same time into the supersensible world of the spirit, of freedom. He must on that account realise his true nature through his own act in his historical development. In this way History is nothing else than the process of development of human nature, its *end* Humanity ("Humanität"), its *form* freedom, the proper-self-activity of the race through the interaction of individuals, its *law* the universal law of development of all organic life: that the Reason in the whole by means of the manifold forces and influences, which cross each other, may establish an enduring condition of equilibrium and harmony, and therewith a maximum of co-operating activities. And as in nature through the

[1] Cf. Böhmer, *History of the Development of the Scientific World-view*, p. 33.

tendency of opposing forces to seek equilibrium (attraction and repulsion), world-systems are constructed out of chaos, in which the harmony of the whole is preserved by the gravitation of the different parts, so in mankind according to the same law of their inner nature Reason and Equity are elaborated out of the confusion of rude powers, and found a condition of enduring humanity. Herein, namely, in the victory of reason and order over the separate strivings of individuals, Herder perceives the historical sway of divine "*Providence.*" But if, on the contrary, an attempt is made to represent this as a special and individual cause, which is continually to break through the course of human action, in order to attain now one and now another particular object of fancy and caprice, this appears to him as "a phantom," which finds its grave in the reality of history; and this indeed is no great loss: "For what sort of a Providence were that, which every man could use as a magical influence in the order of things, as an ally in his narrowest designs, as a shelter for his contemptible follies, so that the universe at last would be without a lord? The God, whom I seek in history, must be the same as he who rules in nature; for man is only a small part of the whole, and his history, like that of the worm, is interwoven with the web which he inhabits. In the case of history also the laws of nature must be valid, since they lie in the essence of the matter, and since the Deity can so little raise himself above them that it is just *in them*, which he himself established, in their glorious might, that he reveals himself with an unchangeably wise and benevolent beauty." In the contest of the divine Reason, goodness and order with the rude forces of chaos, folly and passion, a contest always in the long-run victorious, consist, according to Herder, at once the true law of the development of the world and the sway of divine Providence, which are thus to be thought of, not as external to, but as identical with, each other. Thus the Theodicy of Leibniz is brought into relation, after a genuinely speculative manner, with the necessary causal nexus of Spinoza, and both again with the more profound idea of the Monadology; out of the "*pre-established* (but by no means an external mechanical) Harmony" is gained the thought of an

absolute Harmony *(re)-establishing itself always anew* by means of the dialectic of its finite moments.

It is from this standpoint of a speculative Immanence that we must understand Herder's polemic,[1] in which it must be allowed that his zeal ran to some excess, against Kant's criticism of the Theistic arguments. The arguments for an extra-mundane God are, in his view, as in Kant's, simply impossible, but also unnecessary. For truly to the self-consistent Reason (that, namely, which does not perpetrate the jugglery of demanding in the practical what it has annihilated in the theoretical sphere) God is not the far-off being whose existence is problematical, like that of the man in the moon, a being whom one must first artificially infer, or thereafter, when that, as was to be expected, is found impracticable, must postulate on ethical grounds. To the self-consistent Reason, God is rather the prime existence which she cannot but recognise as given in all existence, the prime force given in all forces, the prime measure given in all relations,—in short, God is to him the highest Reason which she cannot but recognise as given in the world, just because she herself is reason. The question, whether this Idea, at once most lofty and profound, most simple and pure, exists, has for her no more meaning than the question whether anything, whether the world, whether she herself, Reason, has existence? "If there is nothing then, well, there is nothing, and our speculations, as we have no reality, are in vain. But if we do *exist*, if our *senses* perceive, our *understanding* knows, if there is a *Reason*, which has its ground in itself and knows that it has; in that case there is also a *supreme Reason*, which has in itself the ground of the connection of all things, and *knows* that it has. Not, in order to round off the universe, but to comprehend it by means of Reason, not as a mere tangent or sector do I look for the notion of a supreme Being; to me he is given in myself and in all around. Either every atom is an independent existence, or all that there is, is, in its enduring connection, being and activity, founded upon a supreme Reason." God is the "Noumenon" not behind, but *in* all phenomena, hence not

[1] In the *Metakritik* (Works, *z. Phil. u. Gesch.* 17).

capable of being himself represented as a phenomenon, but thinkable, and indeed necessarily thought by our reason. "Whoever sets down the purest Idea of the reason as a figment of imagination, sets down also as imagination that $2 \times 2 = 4$; he gives up the inner necessity of the conception, which binds together and holds fast all our ideas." It may be seen that Herder has acutely hit the weak point of the Kantian Dialectic, the sceptical presupposition that an idea may be necessary to rational thinking, and yet its truth remain doubtful. In his presupposition of a highest reason as the basis of the possibility of all our knowledge he indicates the cardinal point of every demonstration of God's existence.

To this conception of God corresponds also Herder's *Conception of Religion.* If God is the supreme Power and Reason, which lies at the basis of the world's phenomena in all their variety, and manifests itself in their arrangement, in the harmony of forces, Religion is just the practical reception of this divine ordering activity, so that the consciousness of it, applied to the ordering of one's own life, becomes a willing acquiescence on one's own part in the divine order of the world. This conception is most clearly expressed in the definition: "Religion is our intimate consciousness of what we are as portions of the world, of what as men we should be and do." It is thus not mere Ethics, not looking at our duties as the commands of a lawgiver outside of the world, but it is a practical view of the world, the conviction of our being placed in the universe, and standing to it in a moral relation consequent upon this position. That this view is at any rate more profound and comprehensive than that of Rationalism, and of Kant, is beyond question. It approaches most nearly to that of Leibniz on the one side, and Fichte on the other, so that, in this case, Herder once more appears as occupying a guiding transitional position. The first instructor in Religion is Nature herself; and this might be looked for, since Nature is the elementary manifestation of the supreme organising power. And in saying this, Herder had at once opened up the way to the understanding of the entire Nature side of the religious consciousness, and therewith also of the essence of all religions of

Nature, which understanding had, down to his time, been rendered impossible in a way which is now scarcely credible. For an age which had been accustomed to see in the whole of Mythology nothing but senseless superstition, it must really have been like a new revelation when at length Herder in his touching way described how Mythology had been just the most lively religious consciousness of primitive mankind, who felt everywhere in Nature, where life, light, and power appeared, a revelation of Deity, and saw everywhere its creative power, its angels and miracles. Here at last the key was found to that "mythical and poetical vein of Religion," which (as happily expressed by Hamann) had been a puzzle and a stumbling-block to the cold and meagre Philosophy of the Illumination.

Herder immediately attempted to apply this new-found key to the *primitive traditions of the Bible.* While orthodox and rationalists had hitherto been disputing concerning the historical truth or falsehood of the narratives, Herder prefers to find in them a poetry true from a religious, but unreal from a historical standpoint, natural and sensible images of higher thoughts. Although in particular instances he often made mistakes (as for example in the interpretation of the story of Creation where he lacked the parallels supplied since his day by the history of religions), the principle which he thereby introduced into the science of the Bible has been one capable of inexhaustible applications—of greater importance certainly than Herder himself appears at first to have recognised. For it still seems strange to us of the present day, how scanty was the use he made of the principle of the poetical-religious legend, though this evidently presented itself as a very obvious means of interpreting the miraculous narratives of the New Testament, which with Herder's metaphysical view of the world it was no longer possible to regard as historical. Herder's attitude to the miracles of the Bible remained to this extent unchanged during the various periods of his theological development, that he always regarded the religious and moral idea as the real kernel of the narrative, the historical element serving as an excellent illustration, a means, not to be despised, of presenting it visibly. But whether the miracle is to be

regarded as having something more than this ideal significance, namely, positive reality as an outward occurrence, is a question on which he appears to have held different views at different times, while he never reached a principle to make him quite clear regarding it. During his Bückeburg period, when outward influences, combined with his own mental mood, were raising his opposition to the shallow Illumination to its highest point of intensity, he found the biblical miracles one and all quite credible, as the "outcome of the omnipotent power of God," while he concealed the difficulties the reason feels in accepting them as real occurrences behind the good ethical and æsthetical impression they make. Reason as such was not allowed to come forward and institute an examination; he always hastened at once to spiritualise and allegorise the letter, and the ideal truth he thus discovered in the story, or perhaps imported into it, served as a guarantee, without further inquiry, of its historical truth. His way of looking at history is everywhere remarkable for poetic and genial feeling rather than for sobriety or critical acuteness; and while his sympathetic insight reveals to him a deeper understanding of the religious meaning of the Bible than the wooden Illumination could ever attain, he never reaches those assured results of historical inquiry which reveal themselves only to the patient labour of objective scientific thought. He very properly insists that the New Testament must be read in the spirit of the New Testament itself, "with new insight," he says, "new feeling for the greatness of the matters it contains." But then the greatness, the deep religious and moral power of these writings gets the better of him, carries him away, overpowers him. He loses the freedom with which he treated poetical works when in full command of his understanding; and only here and there does he make an attempt to distinguish what belongs to the use of language of the time and what to the matter spoken of, what to the view of the writer, and what to the objective fact. Here, as in the Old Testament, he is without that notion in which criticism discerns the meeting-point of poetry and faith, the notion of myth. Yet for all this, perhaps in no other way could the lost sense for religion, for the profound and inward

bearings of the fundamental truths of Christianity, for the original meaning of the venerable monuments of our faith, be recovered. The mystic, enthusiastic interpretation of these records was, in fine, the necessary preparation for a truly historical, critical, and rational treatment of them."—(Haym.) In his later period, however, when his study of Spinoza had taught him that the omnipotent power of God manifests itself in the orderly course of the world rather than in miracles, his attitude changed. In some cases he treated the historical truth of the miraculous narratives of the Bible simply as a point into which he did not inquire, while in others he went into rationalistic attempts to explain the miracle, and got rid of it as miracle altogether.

More distinct, as well as more consistent, than his view of miracles was his view of the nature of *revelation*. Generally, he regards it as an "Education of the Human Race," which is by no means opposed to human reason; but rather is charged with the task of forming and educating that reason, since the latter did not come down from heaven, as some think, ready formed. God's revelation was given to man inwardly from the very beginning; it was present in his reason and conscience, not as a full-grown inherited idea, but as "the feeling which underlies all the ideas of the reason, for the invisible in the visible, the one in the many, the power in the effects." But men had still to learn to use their reason, and to become fully aware of the object for which they were in the world, and of the power of God which worked in them; they had still to learn to regulate and curb the inclination of their hearts. The educating divine revelation helped them to learn these things, principally by means of the outward signs in nature, by which it stirred up the still child-like spirit of man to put forth and train the powers which had been implanted in him. But this universal natural revelation was supplemented from the first, Herder believes, by the personal influence of remarkable original minds, those "guardian angels of our race, who with their minds illumined the age in which they lived, who folded nations to their hearts, and lifted them, even against their will, to put forth giant power. They shine

far above the rest, like stars in the darkness of night. They sacrifice their lives, just to be true to the word and the deed which they bear in themselves as their divine vocation." The traces of the wholesome humanising influence of such heroes of the early time are, Herder holds, to be recognised in the primitive traditions of all peoples. If the beginnings of human civilisation thus stood under the guidance of a "childhood revelation," it may come about in time that daughter Reason, having learned to walk from mother Revelation, should at last desire to be freed from her leading-strings. When that time comes, the mother can only say, "Walk by yourself, I will not hinder you: I force myself on no one; I scarcely let it be seen that I was teaching you at all." Thus revelation, in whatever way it announces itself to individuals, has for its aim the education of reason to independence; it contains no secrets which would transcend the power of reason, it demands no acquiescence at the sacrifice of our own reason, which it seeks to form, not to suppress. According to Herder revelation is simply the providential guidance of the development of the human mind, through the influences operating on individuals and on peoples which combine to produce a certain result through their experience of nature and of the course of human events. But for this very reason, that it acts through history, it is not uniform from the first, or in all circumstances (which was the view of "natural revelation" taken by the abstract unhistorical Illumination); it is highly varied and progressive, and suits itself to place and time, to race and person. The progress of human civilisation is not always and everywhere on the same road, or at the same rate; on the contrary, God makes use of special peoples and special times for special purposes; and hence comes "positive revelation" by chosen divine instruments,—legislators, sages, and religious founders, a revelation which, though special, is yet no more than a pædagogic appliance for the realisation of that which is the end of the race as a whole, namely, of true *humanity*.

Thus, according to Herder, revelation is not supernatural in respect of its contents; what it contains is nothing opposed to man's natural reason; and it consists with this that it should not be in a

form which completely removes it from the ordinary state of the human mind. Herder protests most decidedly against the notion of *inspiration* as put in the doctrine of the Church, a notion which makes the inspired person "an organ-pipe for the wind to blow through, a hollow machine, deprived of all thought of its own." Inspiration, illumination, is neither a damming up of the powers of the human mind, nor a wild exaltation of them; it is no unconscious ecstasy, no sensuous intoxication. "He who made the eye, should he require to make it blind to let us see? The spirit which animates the creation and all our forces, should he suspend these powers in order that he instead of them might make light in us? Horrible dream, from unplatonic magic caves, foreign to the spirit of the Hebrew Scriptures!" On the contrary, inspiration, illumination, is just the arousing of the noblest powers of the mind; the stillest contemplation, the deepest self-reflection, the wisdom which acts most quietly, bright thoughts, cheerful prospects, hopeful purposes, pure acts—these are the noblest spiritual gifts, and no words can better express their character than 'light, brightness, clearness.' The highest degree of revelation is to see things as they are, apart from pictures and dreams, face to face. It was on this account that the Hebrews held Moses to be the greatest prophet, that he spoke with God as friend with friend, without a veil, distinctly, openly, familiarly. The spirit of the discourses of the prophets was patriotism, their end morality. And least of all should we look in the revelation of him whom John calls "clear reason made manifest," for a dark fanaticism. The secret hidden from the wise which God revealed to him—*i.e.* placed clearly before him—was just the easy yoke, the simple rule and religion of humanity. He who fails to discern the direct tendency of Christ to a truth that all men could understand, a truth necessary and transparent; he who does not see in the gospel his distinct repudiation of everything unnatural, he has missed Christ's spirit and aim. Redemption from what is unnatural, the restoration of humanity to the use of its powers, this was his revelation, *i.e.* the truth he clearly saw and plainly declared.

Christianity is characterised by Herder, in his treatise *Religion*

and Doctrinal Opinion,[1] as the one religion of humanity, in which the one "rule of salvation" has been set forth in a manner at once complete and of universal validity, namely: "Knowledge of God as the Father, of man as his organ, of the weakness of man as the object of patience and of effort after mastery, and of the divine in man, of the strong, pure, and noble, as that which is to be encouraged and supported. Thus love, acting on its own impulse, pure, uniting, energetic, is the only way of rescue from every evil that presses upon mankind, the only motive which impels us to erect a kingdom of God among men." Just this was the contents of the consciousness and life of *Jesus:* "In his heart it was written: God is my Father, and the Father of all men; men are brethren to each other." To this religion of the human race he devoted his life, ready to sacrifice it willingly if only this might become the religion of men. For it is addressed to the primitive character of our race, and declares its original and its final destiny. The "infirmities of mankind become in it the lever laid hold of by a nobler power, every oppressive evil, even of human wickedness, an incentive to its own defeat." "The truest *humanity* is what is contained in the few discourses of Jesus we possess; humanity is what he demonstrated in his life and emphasised by his death; as, indeed, he loved to call himself the *Son of Man.* As a spiritual saviour of his race, he designed to form *men of God,* who, under whatever laws, should from pure love of doing so, further the good of others, and, suffering themselves, rule as kings in the kingdom of truth and goodness. That a view of this sort alone can form the purpose of Providence with our race, and that all the wise and good men of the earth must and will co-operate in this design, in proportion as their thoughts and aims are pure, this needs no demonstration; for what other ideal could man have of his perfection and happiness on earth if not this one of humanity, which acts in every possible direction?"

But from this *Religion of Christ,* which consists in the purest humanity, Herder distinguishes, just as Lessing does, the *Religion on Christ—i.e.* the "unthinking worship of his person and his cross."

[1] Works: *zur Rel. u. Theol.*, vol. xviii.

The latter he describes in his *Ideas on the Philosophy of History* (Book xvii.), as "a side-stream, in many ways polluted, from the pure source of Jesus." He points out the influence of those chiliastic apocalyptical hopes which, while they bound the hearts of the faithful strongly to each other, and gave them a union apart from the world, yet led them to contempt for the world, to a want of patriotism, to a fanatical desire of martyrdom. The exercise of beneficence, again, contributed powerfully to the spread of Christianity, especially among the poor and wretched; but on the other side the evil could scarcely fail to arise, that alms were extolled and sought after as the true treasures of the kingdom of heaven; thus, on the one side fostering a pauper spirit, and on the other encouraging outward acts of merit, done with a view to reward, to the ruin of morality. Though much of this may be excused on the score of the circumstances of the age in question, yet it is certain that a view which regards human society as a great hospital, and Christianity as a great agency of poor-relief, must in time produce a rotten condition of morals and politics. Again, the patriarchal position of the clergy as judges and fathers of the faithful, so natural in a simple and uncorrupted state of society, yet leads in time to a slavish dependence on the part of the people, entangles the Church in worldly disputes, and divides society into a spiritual and a temporal kingdom, a state of matters which prevented a settlement of Europe for more than a thousand years. Of specially evil influence was the zeal expended in the formation of dogmas. As men departed more and more widely from Christianity as at first instituted, which was a co-operation for the good of men, they took to speculating on matters lying beyond the boundaries of the human understanding; they found mysteries, till they transformed the whole instruction of Christian doctrine into a mystery. This led to heresies and systems, to get rid of which the very worst method was chosen, namely, Church assemblies and synods. How many of these are a disgrace to Christianity and to sound reason! And then the "pious fraud," the habit of putting forth literary forgeries to serve Church interests! The impression which it makes is the more disagreeable, as the

Christian epoch directly succeeds an age distinguished by the most excellent historians of Greece and Rome—while, in the Christian era after them, true history is almost entirely lost, and sinks to the level of monastic chronicles. With science taste also became degraded, falling under the barbaric love of the ceremonial of the Church, which was an extraordinary mixture of the usages of all lands and religions. Christian asceticism, the exaggerated value attached to solitude, contemplation, celibacy, led to monasticism, an institution which did infinitely more harm than good, both to society and to the individual. And, finally, chiliastic misunderstanding of the nature of the kingdom of heaven fostered a false enthusiasm, which, contemning worldly order and labour, and providing an open door to every mystic fanaticism and every deception, worked at all times great disquiet and mischief. The purer Christian enthusiasm, on the contrary, when it struck into a good path, did more in a short time in the course of many centuries, than a philosophical coldness and indifference ever could effect. "The leaves of the fraud fall away, but the fruit ripens. The fire of the age devoured straw and stubble, the true gold it could only purify. As the true medicine was changed into poison, so the poison again can be changed into medicine, and a cause which is good and pure at its origin must triumph in the end."

In the Christianity of the early and mediæval church Herder finds, we see, much that is straw and stubble, so that it might seem doubtful whether the gain balances the loss. But the more unhesitatingly does he point, with the reformers, to the *Bible*, as the quarter to which we must look for the true treasure of Christian gold. "Back to the Bible with your dogmatics," he cries to the theologians; "with it in your hand you may get beyond the school exercises of the past centuries; with it you will get nearer to the heart of the people, than with featureless philosophy, and rejection of what does not please you in the traditional church doctrine." What attracted Herder's sympathy so fully to the Bible was, however, as much its poetical beauty, its natural simplicity, its suggestive picture-language, as its practical religious power and salutariness.

He placed the Bible as high as any Protestant theologian, but then he saw in it and desired that others should see in it, not the miraculous product of mechanical inspiration, but a book written by men and for men, which must be treated humanly, historically. Those who read it thus would find in it the truest, noblest humanity, and with that, or because of that, they would find in it divine truth. In thus insisting on the simplicity of the Bible, Herder certainly exerted a wholesome influence on his age: but that he stopped short here, was "not his strength but his weakness, and the cause of the disproportionate smallness of the results he actually produced on theology."[1]

Here we have further to observe that Herder simply failed to obtain a clear positive apprehension of the meaning of doctrine, of the theologoumenon, of dogma in religion and the church. It is certainly true that the sharp distinction between religion and doctrinal opinion, which he has in common with Lessing, was a great step in advance, and first made it possible to trace religion backwards from its manifestations to its inner essence in the human heart. But though we go back from the mechanism of doctrine to the immediacy of the religious consciousness, feeling, inner mood, and so forth, we by no means escape from the necessity of a *positive* comprehension of dogmas, and thus of religion in its objective historical aspect. That problem still remains where it was. When Herder asks: "What have doctrinal opinions to do with religion? Religion is a matter of the heart, of the innermost consciousness; what is there in common between this attitude of the soul and doctrinal opinions? These are propositions which may and must be argued both on one side and the other! But religion knows nothing of argument; arbitrary doctrinal opinions are the grave of religion!" —We reply to all this with the single question: Whence, then, in point of fact do all these "doctrinal opinions," that is dogmas, proceed in the case of every religion which has been in any degree elaborated? Whence proceeds the lively interest in them, and the passionate jealousy concerning their truth? This is clearly not

[1] Werner. Herder, *als Theolog.*, p. 273, *seq.*

explained by a simple negation. It is the business of all science to explain, not to deny! Although, therefore, we cannot doubt that an important advance was made by the distinction between religion and religious doctrine in opposition to the dogmatic identification of them, yet on the other hand, the mere distinction of the two falls far short of the aim of the speculative science of religion, which aim can be no other than this: by means of religion to *comprehend* religious doctrine in its historical and essential necessity. This was indeed demanded even by Herder's own principle of going back to the historical beginnings as the basis of explanation for the actual. But to apply this principle and see what it involved in the department of dogmas, the most difficult branch of the whole subject, there was still wanting a twofold preparatory work: a more penetrating critical analysis of the historical materials, and a deeper philosophical analysis of the religious consciousness. Herder stands indeed upon the threshold of the speculative philosophy of religion, but cannot be regarded as having crossed it.

CHAPTER III.

JACOBI.

THE special significance of Jacobi lies in his acute polemic against the one-sidedness of subjective idealism and abstract rationalism, and in his assertion of direct experience as the ultimate source of real knowledge; but his weakness was that he remained entangled in the opposition between experience and science, between immediate apprehension and mediate thought; that he overlooked their necessary connection as the two poles of our knowledge, and, in most unscientific fashion, ranked science itself, especially in its highest departments, such as science of mind and philosophy, quite beneath direct individual perception.

Strictly speaking, Jacobi is a philosopher only in his polemic against other philosophical points of view, not in his own positive opinions. His criticism especially of the Kantian subjective idealism hits the weak point of that system with great acuteness and force. "It is the merit of Jacobi that he was the first to show the contradiction in the doctrine of Kant, by the solution of which mainly German philosophy has advanced beyond the criticism of Kant."[1] He pointed out how the Kantian theory of knowledge wavers, chameleon-like, between empiricism and idealism; how on the one side it pre-supposes external things in themselves as causes of our sense-perceptions, and on the other again abolishes them, making them mere products of our subjective thought-activity, in accordance with the category of Causation, which has only validity for phenomena; whereby the causality of the thing in itself becomes a mere subjective determination of our own mind. In this way he shows that Kant's half idealism necessarily leads

[1] Harms, *ut sup.*, p. 94. Cf. my Essay upon Jacobi in the *Jahrb. f. Prot. Theol.* 1876, iv.

on to the complete idealism of Fichte. But in the case of Fichte also he acutely detects the fundamental error: since in one and the same act of consciousness we become *simultaneously* conscious of our Ego and its object, and since the two sides *mutually* condition each other, it is impossible that the Ego can be real and its object a mere unreal phenomenon in and through the Ego; if "without a Thou there is no I," we must necessarily either acknowledge the reality of the Thou or grant the unreality of the I. Should, however, subjective idealism again posit by means of practical postulates the reality theoretically surrendered, Jacobi sees in this (and most justly) an intolerable self-contradiction of reason: "Is there such a thing as an objective regeneration of our practical ideas by means of a postulate arbitrarily introduced to fill up a gap? The ideas of God, Freedom, and Immortality have not even a claim to the rank of a mere hypothesis! And nevertheless the Kantian system demands a rational belief in them, nevertheless man must act as though there were a future, and a God who rewards goodness! Will man be able to do so as soon as he has attained the least degree of philosophical self-knowledge, and learns to regard all these pre-suppositions as subjective fictions, lacking every objective reality? Only superstition erects a dream into a reality, reason favours no deception; just in proportion as it is reasonable does it find it impossible to think anything unthinkable. The greatness of the need does not remove the impossibility of attributing objective existence to certain ideas as soon as their subjectivity is beyond all doubt established. What creative power can we conceive to reside in reason to raise, contrary to its own laws, God, Freedom, and Immortality to more than an ideal truth, however urgently it requires this their reality? According to Kant man stands in an eternal dilemma between his practical postulates and his use of reason; he cannot attain to the *knowledge* of that great task of all philosophising, a religion and freedom; cannot attain to a *faith* in them, but possesses in them a stock of ideas merely problematical in their nature, and useful in certain circumstances." He shows further that the Kantian postulates have not even a practical justification from the standpoint of the puritanic Ethics of Kant

himself, since they essentially rest upon the supposition that sensuousness, though at first restrained, is yet ultimately to be justified.

Not only to the Idealism of Kant, but to Philosophy universally, Jacobi opposes the immediate knowledge of experience, of perception through the internal and external senses, as the only means of apprehending truth. "Every demonstration supposes something already demonstrated, which must have its first beginning in revelation," that is, in a knowledge which without any interposition of thought, presents its object immediately to the consciousness. The only direct knowledge of this kind is the "perception," which reveals existence directly, allows us to know the actual truth of what is, not mere "phenomena," behind which there may be no existence, or at most there may be concealed an unknowable existence, an x, so that the phenomena are strictly a mere *semblance* of the truth. It is in this reaction from subjective Idealism in the direction of Realism that the justification of this standpoint lies; it is further essentially distinguished from the earlier Sensualism, in that it did not, like the latter, limit experience to the external sense-perception, but assumed along with this as a second and equally real source of truth the perception of the internal sense, of mental feeling, of belief, in so far as it is a super-sensible experience. Just as man apprehends the sensible world by means of his bodily senses, he apprehends the super-sensible world by means of his rational sense. The understanding, on the other hand, is the faculty of conceptions, or of the formal elaboration, arrangement, and systematising of the matter of knowledge given in sense. Notions never produce knowledge, they only give it shape. And even this, it must be confessed, they scarcely do in such a way as to confer a genuine advantage upon knowledge. Jacobi can only regard the thinking activity of the understanding as an empty abstraction which has in view not so much an orderly arrangement, as a "distinction, annihilation, and complete clearance of the actual and manifold," and hence results, when consistently followed out as a principle in the construction of philosophical systems, in "Nihilism." He only allows a Science of Nature, since Nature is the region of the necessary and regular

which alone can be made the subject of science. But he takes his revenge by assigning an extremely low place to the Science of "blind, mechanical necessity;" knowledge of the laws of Nature appears to him as "another form of ignorance, a knowledge of that which is not worth knowing, a playing with empty numbers, by which time may be passed, but cannot be truly occupied." This is from his point of view very intelligible, since to him Nature is but the absolutely idea-less, and anti-spiritual, in which the human mind can only see its own perfect antithesis, Unreason.

While, therefore, our knowledge, our notional and intelligible thinking can only deal with a Nature which is unworthy of study, without reason or mind, that which, on the other hand, is, in Jacobi's view, alone worthy of being known, the world of mind, of that which is above sense and belongs to the realm of freedom, can never become the subject of notional comprehension. Its reality, indeed, is equally assured to us with that of the external world, since we receive it in the perceptions of the internal sense or rational feeling. But to apprehend this reality like that of the outer world, by means of thought, to make it matter upon which Science may exercise its power of arrangement and system, is regarded by Jacobi as impossible. He is inexhaustible in his modes of expression with reference to this immediate manifestation and inexcogitableness of God, Freedom, and Immortality. God cannot be proved, because proving is equivalent to deducing, and so makes that which is proved dependent on something else (that in this marvellous opinion the state of being ideally logically conditioned, is confounded with that of real dependence, Jacobi might have learned even from Thomas Aquinas!). God requires therefore no proof, for his existence is more evident and more certain to us than our own. "To have reason and to know about God is one and the same thing, as it is also the same thing not to know about God and to be an animal." Our spiritual consciousness, as a consciousness of freedom, of the good and true, is for us directly transformed into a consciousness of God: "God lives in us, and our life is hid in God. If he were not in this way present to us, immediately present through his image in our

inmost self, what is there outside of him which could make him known to us? Pictures, sounds, signs, which only give the knowledge of what is already understood? A revelation through external phenomena, whatever may be their nature, can at the utmost only stand in the same relation to that which is internal and original as that in which speech stands to reason. Created after God's image, God in us and over us, the type and the antitype, separate and yet in inseparable union: such is the knowledge that we have of him, and the only possible knowledge, by which God manifests himself to man livingly, continuously, and to all ages. Just as man feels himself, and pictures himself to himself, so, only mightier, he represents the Godhead. Accordingly in every age the religion of men has varied with their virtue, their moral condition. We have just *that* God who has become man in us, and it is not possible for us to apprehend any other." Jacobi was indeed perfectly aware that this purely subjective deduction of the idea of God was exposed to the objection that it could yield nothing more than an ideal picture of our own nature, which we had subjectively composed and then externally reflected; but though he vehemently protested against such an accusation, *he nowhere refuted it!* And starting from his own presuppositions, this was impossible. For how could he have proved the objective reality of God, when the only revelation of God appeared to him to lie in a subjective feeling which scorned all interpretations and establishment by means of objective thought? when in his view the whole external world, Nature, testified so little of a creative sway, that it seemed to conceal God much more than to reveal him? Inasmuch as Jacobi—herein a true son of the age of subjective Idealism—narrowed the entire content of the higher consciousness to the most abstract extreme of individual self-consciousness, to immediate feeling, he himself closed up every avenue to a knowledge of objective truth.

Yet we might at least expect so much consistency from such a "Philosophy of Nescience," as Jacobi himself terms his system, that it would strictly abstain from laying down positive notional propositions concerning transcendent objects, so going beyond its own

immediate feeling. Nevertheless Jacobi does this with the greatest simplicity. He knows himself in his spiritual feeling to be not only free at the present time and raised above the necessity of nature, he knows *at the same time* and *as given in the same experience* that he is immortal; as if this future existence could be a matter of immediate feeling, and were not an extremely indirect inference from the present existence! He further knows God not merely in himself as a divine vitality and spiritual power capable of being felt, he knows God *at the same time* and *as given in the same experience* as a personality, extra-mundane, unfettered by any necessity which binds the world, free and working miracles; as if we could immediately in our own being feel the existence of an extra-mundane personality! as if in our feeling anything else whatever could be immediately given than what is in us and takes place in us, proceeding from which we then can, only by the means of thought, reason to what is external! In fine we are here again confronted with the same phenomenon as in the case of Jacobi's friend Hamann: while the feeling heart, at once daring and fearful, coyly retreats from keenness and clearness of thought, and timidly shuts itself up in the inwardness where at least it is certain of itself, it proceeds to cling, since it must have a content of some kind, to the next best forms of representation supplied by tradition, and throws into them the whole force, but also the whole rude and uncultivated caprice of its emotional nature; in this way the subjective spirit identifies itself, its immediate feeling, with the accidental representations round which its feelings gather, and hence regards these *representations* as equally immediate and equally indubitable with the *feeling* which it has in regard to them. But however groundless this *quid pro quo* is when objectively considered, it is just as natural and psychologically intelligible, and hence will reappear with mathematical precision in every case where theoretical scepticism is joined to practical mysticism.

Yet this self-assurance of abstract feeling is a remarkable thing. It lasts just so long as the thinking faculty is unmindful or willingly negligent of its own peculiar claims upon logical truth and consistency. This however can never be expected to continue long

in the case of a mind in any degree active. For the understanding belongs to the circle of our nature as much as the heart, and hence will always revolt anew, in the consciousness of its equal claims to the birthright of spiritual nobility, against the despotism of the heart, which would fain treat it as disposed of and reduced to silence. If the heart does not then accommodate itself to a revision of its claims, and to a reasonable reconciliation of its demands with the rights of the understanding, by which a constitutional and peaceful condition of mutual orderly influence and co-operation would be instituted, there can only remain a permanent condition of conflict, in which no part of the mind attains its just position, and its best strength is uselessly dissipated in the internal strife. Nowhere is this discord so strikingly apparent as in Jacobi, who makes, regarding himself, the noteworthy confession that he was "with the heart a Christian, with the understanding a heathen." He was, indeed, on a closer view neither the one nor the other in the full and proper sense. His Christianity was restricted to the theistic belief in God, held to just the same extent by a Mendelssohn; for the special features of the Christian religion of redemption he had neither historical understanding nor religious interest. But on the other hand, his heathenism of the understanding was wide as the poles asunder from the actual heathen's view of the world, to which nature is not God-abandoned but God-suffused, and does not conceal God, but reveal. On the one side his understanding did not permit him to get beyond a Jewish-Christian theism, and to penetrate by means of it to the mysticism of the characteristic Christian God-consciousness, on account of which he sadly and vainly envied his friends Hamann, Claudius, and others; on the other side, again, the shrinking of his heart from every imperceptible approach towards Pantheism prevented him from reading the more profound and beautiful view of nature maintained by a Herder, a Goethe, a Schelling, who, bridging the chasm between nature and spirit common to mediæval Scholasticism and to Descartes, recognised anew in the undeified mechanism, "the living garment of Deity." In this way Jacobi is a thoroughly instructive example of the manner in

which the arbitrarily maintained divorce between heart and understanding, far from assigning to each its due place, results in obscuring and impoverishing both, while thought and feeling, instead of mutually advancing each other and exercising a quickening and regulative influence upon each other to the benefit of both, rather, by their common strife, maim, confine, and undo each other.

CHAPTER IV.

WOLFGANG VON GOETHE.[1]

THE philosophy of Jacobi, though greatly wanting in firmness and cohesion, had yet a stimulating effect on many of his contemporaries, and it may be said in particular, that no one did more to diffuse a knowledge of the philosophy of Spinoza than Jacobi, its most pronounced opponent. Goethe was one of those whom he was instrumental in bringing to a more intimate acquaintance with this philosophy, which it proved was destined to mould in a great degree the whole thought and style of writing of that great poet and thinker. In the summer of 1774 Goethe made an excursion on the Rhine, in the company of Lavater and Basedow, and it was then that he made Jacobi's acquaintance. In the confidences of the overflowing young hearts, and the interchange between intellects in ferment, a friendship was cemented, which, in spite of the widely different natures of the two men and their wide divergence in later life, was never wholly dissolved. Long after this period Goethe[2] gives a lively account of the powerful impressions made on him in that visit:—"Fritz Jacobi was the first whom I suffered to look upon this chaos. His mind also was working in the depths; he listened to me with the greatest interest, returned my confidence, and sought to lead me to his own way of thinking. Greatly ahead of me in philosophic thought, and even in his views of Spinoza, he tried to guide and to enlighten my dim efforts. It was a new experience to me to find so true an intellectual brotherhood, and I was filled with desire to hear more from him. At night, after the party had broken up, and its members retired to their

[1] Caro: *La philosophie de Goethe*, Paris, 1866. Steck: *Goethe's Religiöser Entwicklungsgang* (Prot. Kirch. Zeitg. 1880). B. Suphan: *Goethe und Spinoza*, 1783-86.

[2] *Dichtung und Wahrheit* (Autobiography), Book xiv.

separate rooms, I went to him again. The light of the moon was playing on the broad bosom of the Rhine, and we, standing at the window, revelled in that unrestrained imparting and receiving, which is natural to the happy exuberance of youthful development."

What was here coming to the birth in Goethe's mind was just that view of the world the germs of which had fallen on his spirit all athirst for truth, on reading the Ethics of Spinoza. In his father's library he had come upon a work vilifying Spinoza, which directed his attention to that greatly misunderstood thinker. From the Ethics of the man who was said to bear the mark of reprobation on his brow, the "breath of peace" had breathed on him which soothed his passionate spirit. In the free thoughts of the lonely thinker there appeared to dawn on his restlessly inquiring mind "a wide free prospect over the whole sensible and moral world." "My faith in Spinoza rested on the peaceful influence he had exerted on me; and it only gained strength when the mystics whom I valued were accused of Spinozism, when I learned that even Leibniz did not escape the reproach, and that even Boerhave falling under suspicion of cherishing such views, had been obliged to leave theology for medicine."

From these expressions we are prepared to find that Goethe's susceptibility to the influence of Spinoza was due to the interest he had previously been led to feel in mysticism, both that connected with religion and that connected with natural philosophy. In Frl. von Klettenburg and in Lavater he had become acquainted with two beautiful souls, both of which had found in mystic communion with the Saviour that cheerful rest and self-assurance for which the young author of "Werther" was still painfully longing. When, however, these two persons came together at Frankfort, Goethe at once saw "how the same belief differs in accordance with the idiosyncrasies of different people." The lady of Herrnhut loved in her Christ the bridegroom of the soul, to whom one surrenders one's-self unconditionally, and confides the disposal of one's life; while Lavater trusted his Christ as a friend, whom one emulates lovingly and without envy. In the conversations which turned on the difference of opinion of the two believers,

Goethe could not agree heartily with either, for his Christ also had assumed a form of his own in accordance with the young man's views, though the others were unwilling to recognise him. To Goethe himself these religious discussions made one point increasingly clear, that in matters of belief it is less important *what* a man believes, or how he represents to himself the object of faith (this depends on our other faculties, or even on circumstances), than *that* he should believe, that his faith in a great, mighty, and inscrutable being should bring him a strong sense of security for the present and the future. Faith is a holy vessel, in which each one is prepared to offer up to the best of his ability his feelings, his understanding, his imagination. With knowledge, on the contrary, the point is precisely what a man knows, how much he knows, how well he knows it; hence we may dispute about knowledge, but not about faith. In the same lines of ideas Goethe wrote at that time to Lavater and Pfenninger: "It is perhaps foolish of me not to do you the pleasure of expressing myself in your words, and not even to demonstrate to you by an experimental psychology of our inner man, that I am a man, and hence can feel nothing but what other men feel. The apparent difference between us is a dispute about words and nothing more, and is due to the fact that I have sensations of things under other combinations, and to express their relations as I know them am obliged to give them other names, which was and ever will be the source of all controversies. Why will you not have done with attacking me with the testimony of others? What end can such witnesses serve? Do I need testimony to the fact that I am? that I feel? I value, love, adore these testimonies just in so far as they show me how thousands or how individuals have felt before me that which strengthens and invigorates me. This is what the word of man or the word of God can do for me, whether it was parsons or whores who gathered it up and rolled it into a canon, or scattered it in fragments. With all my heart and soul, then, I fall upon my brother's neck; Moses! Prophet, Evangelist! Apostle! Spinoza or Macchiavelli! To every one of them I can say, Dear friend, your case is just the same as mine: your sensations are vigorous and splendid with regard to

details; the whole could not get into your head any more than mine." This reminds us forcibly of the idea which lies at the root of Spinoza's theologico-political Treatise, that the important point in matters of dogma is less the *verum* than the *pium*, and that the religious importance of dogma consists in its practical effect on the disposition; whereas the theoretical views it sets up are based on imagination, which is not the same in any two individuals, so that it never can furnish a knowledge objectively true of the nature of things. It is very doubtful whether Goethe was intimately acquainted with the philosophy of Spinoza at the time when the above passage was written;[1] the reference would be chiefly to the theologico-political Treatise, a work which, so far as I know, he never alludes to. It is the more remarkable that Goethe's observation of the religious life in himself and his friends had already led him at this time to a view of the true nature of faith closely allied to that of Spinoza.

To this we have to add the further consideration, that Goethe's mind could never, any more than the mind of Spinoza, rest content with the merely ideal truths of theology: he was driven by an irresistible impulse to seek a real knowledge of what exists, especially of the power and laws of nature. Of this impulse those cabbalistic theosophical studies were a confused and fantastic expression, to which at this time he zealously devoted himself, along with his lady friend and other devotees. To us it seems a very curious phenomenon, that of young Goethe absorbed in the study of Paracelsus and the Cabbala, seeking the stone of wisdom in an alchemist's laboratory; and yet, what does the scene say to us but the cry of pain put in the lips of *Faust:*

> Where shall I grasp thee, Infinite Nature, where?
> Ye breasts, ye fountains of all life, whereon
> Hang heaven and earth, from which the blighted soul
> Yearneth to draw sweet solace, still ye roll
> Your sweet and fostering tides—where are ye—where?

[1] Lewes, in his biography, assumes that he was, and proposes to interpret the above passage from Spinoza; but this can scarcely be correct. According to the recent investigations of B. Suphan, Goethe did not apply himself to a close study of Spinoza till 1784, when he had met Jacobi a second time at Weimar, and his study of Spinoza was entered on under the influence and guidance of Herder, the "true hierophant of the little Spinoza church."

But, as in the history of human progress, so in the development of young Goethe, the impulse towards truth which first sought to appease itself with wanderings in the mazes of fantastic error, attained at length to the bright heights of science. From magic-cabbalistic alchemy Goethe passed without any violent change to the chemistry of Boerhave; from the search after magical powers and energies he passed to the knowledge of the rational laws of nature. It was at this stage of his devolopment that Goethe first became acquainted with Spinoza—the philosopher who more than any other made the inviolable regularity of the world the corner-stone of his thinking, but who saw in the regular order and unbroken connection of all that comes to pass the omnipotence of creative nature, or the causality of God imminent in the world, and who in this knowledge of the unconditioned, all-conditioning One, had found emancipation from the tyranny of the passions, and the blessed rest of the intellectual love of God. This was what Goethe had been seeking, with the Herrnhuters and Lavater, Paracelsus, and the Cabbala, but had not found; and here at length he found a "great and free prospect over the sensible and the moral world;" here the idea of Nature, which "works in accordance with eternal and necessary laws, which are so much divine that Deity could make no change in them;" here that "stilling of the passions," that "unselfishness without limit" which arises out of the consciousness of unconditional dependence on eternal divine law. This was what drew Goethe to Spinoza, and made him his most passionate scholar and resolute admirer. He found in him the spirit with which his own was linked by elective affinity, and in his philosophy not only a means of culture which helped him to understand himself and the world, but also a medicine which helped him to be free from himself and from the world, and to be at peace. At the same time Goethe never expressed a literal adherence to Spinoza's system, nor became a follower of it in any slavish way. The sole reality of the substance, and the unreality of the *modi*, the two attributes of substance, externally added to it and co-ordinated, namely, thought and extension; and finally, the absence of design from the causality, which is represented as entirely mechanical—all important

features of the system—Goethe never adopted. He even regarded with abhorrence that idealess mechanism which is worked out to its ultimate materialistic consequences in Holbach's *Système de la Nature*. He regarded it as fixed that, "in contemplating the structure of the universe, we cannot help thinking that an *idea* underlies the whole, in accordance with which God may work in nature and nature in God from eternity to eternity." He does not ask if the Highest Being has understanding and reason; the Highest Being, he feels, is understanding, is reason; all creatures are pervaded by it, and man has so much of it that he is able to discern parts of the Highest." And that man, moreover, seeking to bring the highest into relation with his own personal life, with the moral world within him, should represent it according to his own image, that, when seeking to lift himself up to God, he of necessity draws God down to himself, thus anthropomorphising him, to this Goethe does not object. He only objects to this particular and limited idea of the Infinite being taken for the sole and adequate expression of his great and inexhaustible life and being. Against this exclusive and dogmatic anthropomorphism he certainly protests vigorously; and that not from unreligious scepticism, but from the deeply religious feeling he has that the infinite Being is incomparably exalted above all human limitations. In the well-known words of *Faust*, we recognise a confession not of doubt but of pious humility:—

"Him who dare name, And yet proclaim, Him I believe? Who that can feel his heart can steel To say I disbelieve? The All-embracer, All-sustainer, Doth he not embrace, sustain thee, me, Himself? Fill thence thy heart, so large soe'er it be, And in the feeling when thou'rt wholly blest, Then call it what thou wilt; Bliss, heart, Love, God, I have no name for it, 'tis feeling all. Name is but sound and smoke, shrouding the glow of heaven."

"What," Goethe asks in Eckermann, "can our narrow notions tell of the highest Being? Though I named it with a hundred names I would yet fall far short; in comparison with such infinite attributes I would feel that I had said nothing."

In addition to this pious conviction of the inadequacy of all our

limited expressions to the Infinite Being, we have to consider in Goethe the view which led him to protest against the exclusive anthropomorphic idea of God. In the God whom man forms for himself in accordance with the ideal of his heart, comforting and elevating as this idea is to the heart, he yet fails to find the whole of God; he does not find in it that God whom the poet and the speculative thinker see revealing himself in nature and the external life of the world. This tendency is plainly seen in remarkable utterances found at various periods of Goethe's life. Jacobi sent his friends at Weimar the manuscript of his work *On the Doctrine of Spinoza*, in which he declared that Spinozism was Atheism, from which the only possible escape was by the *salto mortale* of faith. Goethe wrote to him (1786): "You say we can only believe in God; but I would have you to know that I am strongly for seeing. Spinoza speaks of the scientific intuition, and says: *hoc cognoscendi genus procedit ab adæquata idea essentiæ formalis quorundam Dei attributorum ad adæquatam cognitionem essentiæ rerum;* and these few words give me courage to devote my whole life to the contemplation of those things, which I can reach, and of the *essentiæ formalis* of which I can hope to form an adequate idea. In this I shall not vex myself with asking how far I am to get, and how much is appointed to me." Spinoza "does not prove the existence of God: existence is God." Though for this others call him *Atheum*, I would rather extol him as *Theissimum et christianissimum*. Goethe was at one with Spinoza, at issue with Jacobi, in his conviction that knowledge of the actual world is at the same time the way to a progressive, though never to be completed, knowledge of God, who is everywhere present in the world, everywhere revealing his existence, his power and his wisdom. Hence the assertion put forward at a later time (1811) by Jacobi, in his work, *On Divine Things*, that nature conceals God, was a painful offence to him; with regard to which he once more sought and found comfort in Spinoza. On this he says in the *Annals:* "A clear and profound view was native to my mind, and had stood the test of time, which taught me to see God in nature, nature in God, without break or interruption. This

way of thinking was the basis of my whole existence, and it was to be expected that so strange, one-sided, limited an utterance would permanently sever me in spirit from this noblest of men, whose heart I knew and loved. But I did not nurse my pain and mortification, but fled to my old shelter, and found my daily occupation in Spinoza's *Ethics* for several weeks afterwards." To Jacobi himself he writes (1812): "The truth is, I am one of the goldsmiths of Ephesus, who has spent his whole life in contemplating, admiring, and worshipping the wonderful temple of the goddess, and in imitating her mysterious forms, and who cannot but feel it painful when any apostle seeks to impose on his fellow-citizens another and, indeed, a formless God." Goethe's mind was realistic, and needed objects to contemplate, and found delight in nature; and the idea of a God not to be contemplated, such as Jacobi's heart required, failed to content him; but he did not on that account reject this idea altogether, he only disallowed it in so far as it sought with tyrannical intolerance to impose itself as alone true, and to depose every other view. In the same strain Goethe writes on another occasion to Jacobi (1813): "For my own part, so various are the aspects of my nature, that no single view can suffice me: as poet and artist I am a polytheist; as natural historian, again, I am a pantheist; and the one as decidedly as the other. If I require a God for my personal life as a moral being, I am at no loss in this direction either. The things of heaven and earth are so wide a realm that it takes all the organs of all beings together to comprehend it." Thus Goethe is convinced that the divine Being reveals itself on too many sides, and is related to the world in too many different ways, to admit of being completely comprehended from any single point of view, or exhaustively expressed in a single limited formula designed to serve subjective interests. Hence the more many-sided the development in any man of the organ of perception of the divine, the less can he bear to be restricted to any single mode of regarding the Deity. The same idea was expressed by Goethe in a conversation with Eckermann owards the end of his life (Feb. 1831). He sets out with the statement that the various religions are not immediately given by God, but are the work of remarkable men, and calculated for the

needs and apprehensions of a multitude of their brethren. The Greek religion went no further than to clothe in sensible forms in separate deities certain aspects of the unfathomable, the defects of these deities being rather concealed than removed by the idea of fate, this being again inscrutable. The one God of Christ was "the essence of his own beautiful inner man, full of goodness and love as he was himself, and altogether such that good men should give themselves to him in faith, and take into their hearts this idea as the sweetest link of connection with things above. But the great Being whom we call the Deity reveals himself not only in man, but also in nature, which is rich and strong, and in the mighty events and changes of the world, and so it is natural that a view of him formed out of human qualities should not suffice. The observer soon comes to inadequacies and contradictions in such a view of God, which awaken doubts in him, and might even cast him into despair if he were not either small enough to be satisfied with some artificial explanation, or great enough to rise to a more commanding view." On these suggestive sayings the editor remarks that Goethe had early found in Spinoza such a higher point of view, and as his position had as its basis from the first the revelation of God through the world, the light thus acquired did not cease to be useful in connection with the deeper inquiries into the world and nature to which he was led at a later period, but developed into an ever richer knowledge. "Opponents often accused Goethe of having no belief. He had not their belief; it was too small for him. If he expressed his own, they would be astonished, but they would not be capable of understanding it."

This will enable us to understand utterances in Goethe in which he appears to attack belief in God and in Providence, but in truth only protests against a too small conception of God, and a selfish and narrow conception of Providence. The powerful poem "Prometheus" is the best known of these: in it the Titanic fire-spirit of the youthful Goethe expresses, in the most touching way, how the thoughtful man, practising resignation, breaks away from the friendly forms of his early faith. "When I was a child and knew nothing, I

turned my wandering eye to the sun, as if there were an ear over there to hear my complaint, a heart like mine to pity the distressed. Who helped me against the Titans' insolence? Who saved me from death, from slavery? Hast thou not done it all thyself, thou holy glowing heart? And glowing, young and good, spokest, deceived, the thanks of the rescued to the sleeper above there,—I honour thee? Wherefore? Hast Thou ever assuaged the griefs of the heavy-laden? or dried up the tears of those vexed with anxiety? Was not I forged and welded to a man by almighty Time and eternal Fate, my masters and thine?" The mood which gave rise to this poem is described by Goethe in his autobiography. "He had often found," he says, "that in the moments when we most need help, we hear the cry, 'Physician, heal thyself!'" A man, however he may lean on others, is yet at last directed to go back to himself; and even the Deity appears to have taken up such a position towards man, as not always to be able to answer his appeal, not at least at the moment when the need is pressing. He can do nothing but seek a foundation for his life in that which is quite his own, and which cannot be either helped or hindered by anything outside him, namely, his productive talent. Thus he makes Faust say—

> The God who throned within my breast resides
> Deep in my inmost soul can stir the springs;
> With sovereign sway my energies he guides,
> But hath no power to move external things.

But this resigned renunciation of a providence which actively helps from without is far removed from the spirit of defiance or self-exaggeration; on the contrary, it is intimately connected with the most pious feeling of "the limits of humanity," of our dependence on the Upholder and Preserver of all, and our subjection to the eternal laws of his holy world-order. In the latter, indeed, according to Goethe's fine expression, true faith in God consists, and at the same time true blessedness on earth, in this: "To acknowledge God wherever and in whatever way he manifests himself," whether in nature or in the life of man. Throughout the whole life of nature he sees "the divine power present and the eternal love everywhere

at work." But even in human history he finds the continuous revelation of God, who by no means retired to rest after the imagined six days of creation, but is still, and ever has been, as active as at first. And especially in human productions of the highest kind, in every great thought which is fruitful and leads to further consequences, he sees "gifts from above, pure children of God," which it is man's part to receive and to reverence with cheerful gratitude. In such cases man stands under the overmastering impulse of a higher power; he is to be regarded "as the instrument of a higher government of the world, as a vessel found worthy to receive a divine influence." Here he is thinking of the great historical men who left their impress on their age, and whose beneficent influence continued to act on subsequent generations. To this class belong first of all the ideal moral forms, in which mankind receives a revelation of what is morally beautiful and good. "Morality came into the world from God himself, like all else that is good. It is not a product of man's reflection; it is innate and original fineness and beauty of nature. It is more or less native to men in general, but in a high degree to individual highly-gifted spirits. These have revealed by great deeds or teachings the divine which dwelt in them, and this at once, by the beauty of its appearance, engaged the love of men, and drew them powerfully to reverence and emulation." What is all this but a pure and lofty faith in the Providence which rules in nature and in history, in the God who, if he does not interfere from without in the process of events, yet continually manifests himself as the source of all that is good and true, as the reason which rules all things?

> Say the round world were by God's finger poised
> And in its circling course for ever sent
> By touch of his outside it—what were God?
> Beseems him not far rather from within
> To move the world? Closed in Himself to hold
> All Nature, Nature Him; so all in Him
> That lives and moves and is does never lack
> His power, His Spirit dwelling still within.

Goethe's metaphysic (if we may use the word) is, we see, a very

spiritualised form of Spinozism. Goethe appropriates the two root-thoughts of Spinoza, that God is the *causa immanens* of the world, and that his working is according to law, and the world a complex of things subject to inexorable necessity (pp. 40, 41); but he quietly changes the abstract substance of Spinoza into creative reason, the unsubstantial *modi* into substantial forces, entelechies or monads, and mere mechanical causality into a development, instinct with life, in accordance with immanent ideas or aims. In all this we see once more the Spinoza corrected by Leibniz which we remarked in Lessing and Herder. In particular, Goethe's contemplation of nature, with his loving attention to the individual and the peculiar, his watching for the inner purpose in the development of all living things, and his delight in the harmony and beauty of the whole, do not belong to Spinoza but to Leibniz.

With his appreciation of individual life is also connected Goethe's belief in immortality, which, however, does not rest, as does that of Leibniz, on the metaphysical argument from the indestructibility of the monads, but on the argument of fitness, that the more valuable a force is, the less can it be dispensed with in the economy of nature. This would only tend to show the particular immortality of able spirits. "I do not doubt of our continuance; for nature cannot dispense with the entelechy: but we are not equally immortal, and to manifest ourselves hereafter as a great entelechy, we must first be one." The conviction of our continuance arises, in my mind, from the notion of activity; "for if I work unceasingly to the end of my life, nature is under an obligation to show me another form of existence, when the present one can no longer support my spirit." Let us go on working till, called by the world-spirit, we return to the æther. Then may the ever-living one not deny us new activities like those in which we have already approved ourselves. Should he then in fatherly kindness add to us memory and the continued feeling in our minds of the right and good which even here we willed and accomplished, that will certainly enable us to act more quickly on the wheels of the world-process. This cheerful looking forward to an endless continuation of his restless activity was

natural to Goethe, as on the other side his realistic joy in the present world is reflected in Faust's declaration :—

> But small concern I feel for yonder world.
> Hast Thou this system into ruin hurled,
> Another may arise the void to fill.
> This earth the fountain whence my pleasures flow,
> This sun doth daily shine upon my woe,
> And can I but from these divorce my lot,
> Then come what may, to me it matters not.
> Henceforward to this theme I close mine ears
> Whether hereafter we shall hate or love,
> And whether also, in those distant spheres
> There is a depth below, or height above.

Like his theoretical view of the world, his spirit for practical life is not simply and merely Spinozistic; the resigned quietism of Spinoza is combined in him with the cheerful and active optimism of Leibniz; and it is hard to say which of the two elements predominated in his mind. At first, as he himself tell us, he found in Spinoza's *acquiescentia animi*, as it arises from a knowledge of the eternal divine laws of the world, a wholesome medicine for his passionate temperament. As all things, our physical as well as our social life, for ever cry to us that we should renounce, he sees the true wisdom, which, indeed, is only imparted to few, to lie in escaping from all partial renunciations, by renouncing one's-self altogether once for all. The inner calm and quiescence of a spirit which, humbly conscious of its finitude and dependence, loves God with an unselfish love, submits without any selfish reservation to his arrangements, and so doing finds a rounded and cheerful peace,—such is the ideal of life which he hopes to learn in Spinoza's school :

> Well may the separate self its life forego
> In th' Infinite to find itself, and so
> Be freed from disappointment evermore :
> Where fevered wishes, wild desires, once reigned,
> Where hard laws ordered, strict commands constrained,
> "To give up self is bliss," is now my lore.

But there is always a reverse side with Goethe to this humble resigned self-renunciation; it is balanced by a vigorous, hopeful, and cheerful self-assertion: he feels himself called to put forth his own

force in restless activity, and so co-operate in the never-ceasing, ever-changing work of the world-spirit:

> Th' Eternal moves in all,
> For all must come to nought
> If it is still to be.

It is only by means of his force to act that man can assert himself against the Infinite, or even think himself in the midst of the eternally living order. His active force enables him to do this, if it circles around a pure centre in himself, and is manifested in the benevolent and beneficent influences which issue from it. True, man errs as long as he strives. But him who labours ever striving, the heavenly ones are ready to set free. That man is to be congratulated who in good as in evil fortunes strenuously exerts himself; for he produces good and compensates for the harm. To produce good, which benefits all alike, and to mend as far as possible the inevitable evil; such is the aim of all truly human activity; in which man fulfils his exalted calling, and at the same time finds his own complete satisfaction. "Let man be noble, helpful, and good! For that alone distinguishes him from all beings known to us! Unweariedly let him create the useful, the right, and be to us a type of those other beings whose existence we surmise."

> Who will do right always, and with delight,
> Shall cherish true love aye in heart and mind!

This well-doing, which secures good-will, constitutes the happiness of man. Goethe says, almost in the words of Leibniz, "One is only then truly alive, when one is rejoicing in the good-will of others."

We see that Goethe's morality is equally far removed from the quietistic mysticism of Spinoza and the rigorous asceticism of Kant. Renunciation and the subjection of the passions is not with him an end in itself, but only a means to make the spirit free and fit for the truly human exercise of doing good, which, sprung from love and engendering love in turn, carries its reward in itself. Hence he is also far from seeking to dam up human impulses and inclinations as such, as if they were in irreconcilable conflict with our moral self, and as if we could only be good by trampling upon them. Tracing everywhere

in outward nature the omnipresent energy of God, he cannot think human nature God-forsaken, he holds it to be filled with God—

> Were not our eye to the great sun akin,
> The sun it never more could see;
> Dwelt not in us the great God's power, I ween
> God's works no joy to us could be.

Reverently to recognise always and everywhere this inner revelation of God as well as that in the outer world, obediently to yield ourselves to the divine voice which speaks to us in our heart, our feeling, and that not reluctantly but willingly, not from constraint and fear, but from love and gratitude, this, according to Goethe, is to be religious, and here also he sees the spring of all true doing of duty; duty being in his eyes truly done only "where we love that which we command ourselves." Hence he says that religion is "not an end, but a means to attain through the purest peace of mind the highest culture;" for moral cultivation is to him simply the ripe fruit of a state of mind which, in willing resignation to necessity and joyful devotion to what is good, is at one with itself and with the world, *i.e.* truly religious.

In this setting up of the morality of beauty and of the heart as against the hard legal morality of Kant, Goethe is at one with Schiller, and even goes a step further. In the essay "On Grace and Worth" (1793), Schiller has occasion to speak of the *Ethics* of Kant, and while not denying their great value and usefulness for that age, he charges them with being quite one-sided. That duty might have sole and undivided authority, Kant would allow inclination to play no part in moral action. Schiller agrees with him that the rightness of any particular action does not depend on the interest taken in it by inclination, but from this very fact he argues that the moral perfection of the whole man can appear in nothing else than his inclination having part in his moral action. Man is not designed to perform individual moral acts, but to be a moral being: he ought to have not virtues but virtue, and virtue is nothing but "an inclination to duty." Thus it is not only permissible to man, it is obligatory on him, to combine pleasure and duty; he ought to obey his reason with joy. He should not put asunder what nature has joined

together in him, nor base the triumph of his divine part on the suppression of the sensuous part. "Only when it springs from his human nature as a whole, as the joint product of the two principles combined, only when it has come to be his nature, is his moral disposition secure, for so long as the moral spirit has to use force, the natural impulse must still have strength to oppose it." In Kant's moral philosophy, Schiller adds, the idea of duty is presented with a hardness which frightens away all the graces, and is liable to be misconstrued as a sombre and monkish asceticism. Little as this corresponds to Kant's cheerful and free spirit, he had yet by his strict and harsh opposition of the two principles which act on man's will given considerable occasion for such a misconception—which no doubt was to be explained from the circumstances of the time. "Kant was the Draco of his time, because it seemed to him not to be ready nor fit for a Solon. But of what offence were the *children* of the house guilty, that he only took into consideration the *slaves?* That very ignoble inclinations sometimes usurped the name of virtue, was that a reason for casting suspicion on the unselfish affections of even the noblest breast? Must the law of reason be made so rigid, as to change even the most vigorous manifestations of moral freedom into a merely somewhat more honourable slavery? Was it even necessary to put the moral law in the form of an imperative, so that it accuses and humiliates mankind? If this is done, does it not become unavoidable that a precept which man as a reasonable being gives himself, and which for this reason alone is binding upon him, and only when given in this way does not infringe upon his sense of freedom, should assume the appearance of a foreign and positive law —an appearance which will scarcely be lessened by the radical tendency of which he is accused to break laws thus imposed? It is certainly not good that moral truths should find themselves opposed by sentiments which man need not blush to own. Reason can never disown, as unworthy of her, feelings which the heart joyfully confesses. If the sensuous part of human nature is always to be in the position of being suppressed, never in that of co-operating, how can it contribute the whole fire of its feelings to the celebration of a triumph

of which it is the vanquished captive?" According to Schiller, then, he who does his duty against his inclination stands on a lower platform than the "beautiful soul," in which the moral sense has taken possession of the man's whole feelings to such a degree that it can fearlessly leave to inclination the guidance of the will, and is never in danger of conflict with its decisions, in which accordingly sense and reason, duty and inclination, so harmonise that the whole character is moral, and not only, as before, the individual actions.

It is extremely instructive to notice the attitude taken up by Kant and that taken up by Goethe towards this moral ideal of Schiller.[1] Kant found that it impaired the majesty of the notion of duty, Schiller having converted morality into beauty and sought to ally reason to sense. Goethe, on the contrary, considered that Schiller had been ungrateful to Nature, the great mother, who had certainly not behaved to him as a stepmother. According to Schiller the conflict of reason and sense was to be transcended in the higher morality of the beautiful soul, according to Kant it was to remain incapable of adjustment, and according to Goethe there is no need for it to be adjusted. Kant distinguishes with a sharp antithesis between man as a reasonable creature, and man as a creature of sense; Schiller and Goethe go back to the unity in this antithesis, Schiller presupposing the antithesis in order to resolve it in unity, while Goethe starts from the unity and treats the conflict only as a vanishing stage in the development, an aberration, obscuration, ailment of Nature. Nature is with him essentially good, and comprises in herself the power to heal her occasional evils, not perhaps in every individual, but in the joint energy of the race, and in the educating and healing influences exerted in society by those who are whole upon the sick.

From this point of view we may understand Goethe's attitude towards Christianity. Christianity being a religion of atonement, has two poles, between which all Christian doctrine and life oscillates. The first, the negative pole, is the sense of sin, or of the opposition

[1] Cf. K. Fischer, *Schiller als Philosoph*, p. 77.

between a holy God and man who is not holy: the other, the positive pole, is the sense of grace, or of the removal of that opposition, the atonement of the division, the unity of God and man. The power of attraction of Christianity lies at one time on the side of its positive pole, at another more on the side of the negative pole, according as the natures differ whom it addresses. For Kant the attraction of Christianity was entirely on its negative side. It impressed him by its earnest sense of sin, by its sharp antithesis of the holy God or law, and sinful human nature, which he did not scruple to define, in agreement with the strictest style of dogmatic, as "radical evil;" the positive pole of Christianity on the contrary repelled him so decidedly, that he scarcely concealed his opinion that the idea of grace and all connected with it was mere immoral superstition (p. 185). With Goethe the very opposite was the case. What attracted him in Christianity was just its forgiving grace, the glad tidings of a salvation meant for all, the conquest of fear by love, of the slavery of the law by the freedom of sonship, of division from God by blessedness in God. But in proportion as this side of Christianity attracted him, its negative pole repelled him. Even the broad setting of God and nature over-against each other was, as we saw, repugnant to his way of thinking; but there was more than this: the doctrines of the sinfulness and the lost condition of human nature, of its entire incapacity for good, of the wickedness of the world, of the vanity of all beauty and natural happiness, and finally the exclusive limitation, consequent on these doctrines, of the source of salvation to historical means and mediators; all this was uncongenial and even repellent to his heart even more than to his mind.

This opposition was directed, as was natural, first and chiefly against the harsh doctrines which we generally, and rightly, distinguish from Christianity as a religion. Yet it would not be quite correct to think that Goethe was offended at Christianity solely because of the harsh way in which its theology is formulated. Looking at the question in an unprejudiced way as one of historical fact, we feel ourselves obliged to acknowledge that Goethe stood in

opposition to Christianity not merely on points of theological form, but to a certain extent on points of substance too. To state the difference in the simplest way, Goethe had no sympathy with the ascetic pessimist element, which, while it is not (as the modern pessimists affirm) the main feature of Christianity, is yet certainly the dark background of its message of salvation. This element of Christianity Goethe's hellenistic and optimistic mind could not appreciate. This is not to be understood as if Goethe's optimism and joy in the world had amounted to an atheistic deification of the world; on the contrary, they were, as in the case of his great relative in the things of the mind, viz., Leibniz, the outcome of a view of the world which was deeply pious and filled with the sense of God's presence. If we remember his fine saying: "To acknowledge God wherever and in whatever way he reveals himself, that is the true blessedness on earth," and if we remember how it was a natural requirement of his mind to see everywhere in the world, in nature and history, in things small and in things great, from the quiet life of plants to the world-moving deeds of heroes, the revelation of God, His power, His reason, and His love: then we may understand what an offence it was to a mind thus in sympathy with nature and rejoicing in what was natural, to see "of God's earth the cheerful glow, denied and changed to vale of woe;" the beauties of nature and of art represented as devilish sirens, and hideousness set up to be worshipped—nature stripped of her true and ever-present miracle and degraded to a machine behind which God was concealed, or accused of unnatural miracles instead of the real ones; all that was bright in humanity blackened over, and all that was noble in history degraded to the dust of a universal reprobation, in order that all the light of the world might proceed from one point alone. As Goethe protested against the anthropomorphic notion of God, because it was in his eyes too small for the real being of God (p. 242), so also he protested against the exclusiveness and hostility to nature of the ecclesiastical dogmatic Christianity simply because it appeared too small, too narrow, for his faith in the eternal and omnipresent revelation of God. That this opposition was sometimes carried to the

point of bitterness and injustice cannot be denied; but the fact may be explained from temporary impressions and moods. During his journey in Italy, for example, the contrast between classic beauty and the hollow pomp of the Church of Rome, inspired him with a kind of Julianic fanaticism. Sometimes also he was offended at the presumption and bad taste of such Christians as Lavater; in whom the conjunction of the character of man of the world with that of mystic was in itself an offence to Goethe's simple truthfulness.

Some expressions of Goethe on the questions raised by Lavater may here be cited in proof of the foregoing statements: "You regard the Gospel," he writes to Lavater (1772), "as it stands, as the fulness of divine truth, but even a voice from heaven would not persuade me that water can burn, that a woman can conceive without a man, and that a dead man can rise again. Such statements I regard as blasphemies against the great God and His revelation in nature. You think there is nothing more beautiful than the Gospel: I find a thousand leaves written by God-favoured men both ancient and modern to be quite as beautiful and useful and indispensable to mankind. Now, suppose that I am as vehemently in earnest about my faith as you are about yours, and that if I had to address the public I would speak and write on behalf of the aristocracy I believe God to have set up with as much zeal as you do for the monarchy of Christ." "Considering your wish, your longing, to find in one individual all you want, and the impossibility that one individual can satisfy you, it is most fortunate that a picture has been preserved from ancient times into which you can put your all, and in him reflect yourself, worship yourself. One thing only I cannot but think unjust, and indeed a robbery unworthy of your good cause, that you pluck out all the fine feathers of the thousand birds of heaven, as if they had stolen them, and adorn your bird of Paradise alone with all of them; this cannot fail to vex us and to seem to us intolerable, since we are used to put ourselves to school to every truth revealed through men to men, and as sons of God to adore Him in ourselves and in all his children." "Nature deserves great thanks for having implanted in the existence of each living being so much healing power that when

it is torn at one end or the other it can stitch itself together again. And what are the thousandfold religions but the thousandfold manifestations of this healing power? My plaster will not stick in your case, yours will not stick in mine; in our Father's surgery there are many recipes. Thus I have no answer to your letter; I cannot refute it, but I have much to oppose to it. We ought once for all to put our confession of faith in two parallel columns and then form a treaty of peace and tolerance."

No such treaty was formed: the difference widened to a breach which was never to close. Goethe said about Lavater at this time that he had lost his head over the story of Christ, and that the grossest superstition was united in him in the most curious way with the highest understanding. It is not difficult to understand his saying so when we consider the entire divergence of the ways of thinking of the two men, one of them seeing God's revelation in all that is good and true, the other recognising no revelation of goodness and truth but at one point, there being only one form in which he could imagine it and represent it to himself so as to bring him edification. Goethe took no account of this personal psychological motive, the need of a figure to lean upon, which is so natural to the religious temper; and this makes his judgment unfair and hard.

With all this Goethe was far from making up his mind to reject Christianity or doubting the incomparable power of healing that lies in faith in Christ. This we see from his fine poem "The Secrets," which was commenced two years after the last-cited letters, and in which it was his object to represent Christianity as the consummation of religion. Man on his pilgrimage through the world in search of the highest good, hears bells ringing and comes to the cross:

> He sées, betokening hope and consolation
> To all the world, the sign upraisëd high,
> The pledge of countless souls' self-dedication,
> To which has risen of countless hearts the cry:
> To Death's reign sign of sure annihilation,
> Inwrought on many a flag for victory;
> Through his outwearied limbs a fresh life flies;
> He sees the cross, then lowers his veilëd eyes;

He feels how great salvation thence proceedeth,
The faith of half a world glows in his breast once more.

The poem remained unfinished, but Goethe took up the idea again at a later period and carried it out in another form in *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship*. Religion, we read in the second book of this work, ought to awaken in man a threefold reverence: reverence for that which is above us, for that which is around us, and for that which is under us. The last and most difficult stage is attained in Christianity, in which we are enabled to recognise as divine even lowness and poverty, scorn and contempt, shame and misery, suffering and death, and to regard even sin and crime not as mere obstacles but as furtherances of holiness, and thus to reverence and love them. This end being once reached, humanity cannot again go back from it, and we may say that the Christian religion having once appeared can never disappear, that having once been the subject of a divine incarnation it cannot be dissolved again. True, he adds, only the three religions taken together produce the true religion; because these three reverences give birth to the highest of all—man's reverence for himself, "so that man reaches the highest that he is fit to attain, that he is entitled to regard himself as the best that God and nature have produced, yet that he continues at this height without being dragged down to commonness again by vanity and selfishness." In the three articles of the creed we find, he holds, the unconscious confession of this threefold religion, and in this view the three divine persons who provide a symbol and a name for such convictions may justly be regarded as the highest unity. Thus Goethe considers it to be the distinctive merit of Christianity that it makes man sure of his divine rank and extraction even in the deepest humiliation, and in the form of a servant imposed on him by his earthly lot, and that it thus brings to his spirit a clear and ineffaceable conviction of his freedom and his value and his elevation above the chances of the world of sense. Hence by this time he has learned to value the cross, which was such a bugbear to him in the fit of naturalism he had on his Italian journey. He sees in it the symbol of the idea he expressed in the beautiful verse:

Till this truth thou knowest:
"Die to live again"—
Stranger-like thou goest
In a world of pain.

Not only did Goethe frankly recognise the permanent value of Christianity in general; he expressed in glowing words, shortly before his death, his conviction of the divine loftiness of the person of Christ. The question of the genuineness of the Gospels had come up in conversation, and Goethe first remarked that the question of genuine or spurious was a ridiculous one in matters concerning the Bible, since what is genuine in the true (religious) sense attests itself simply by its inner value (thus apart from the historical question of its origin). In this he stated very happily what is the only important consideration for religion and the church, a consideration quite apart from all historical criticism. He allows that so far as the question is one of mere historical truth, the genuineness, *i.e.* the historical character of the Gospels, may in some points be doubtful. "Yet," he continues, "I regard all the four Gospels as thoroughly genuine, for they actively reflect a loftiness which went out from the person of Christ, and which was as divine as anything that ever appeared on the earth. If I am asked whether it is in my nature to pay him the reverence of worship, I reply, Most certainly. I bow before him as the divine revelation of the highest principle of morality." This Christian confession is followed, it is true, by a statement which sounds paradoxical, but was highly significant for him, of another confession of a somewhat heathenish order. He said that it is equally according to his nature to worship the sun as the mightiest visible revelation of God for us children of the earth; that he adored in the sun the light and the generative power of God by which alone we live and move and have our being, and all plants and animals along with us. In all this Goethe is thoroughly consistent: Christ is to him the highest revelation of God in the moral world, but the revelation of God in the moral world is, as before, not the only one to him, but has at its side the revelation in nature; and he thus puts Christ and the sun together as two objects of worship, because they

are the two highest forms of divine revelation. This paradox amounts, at the root of the matter, to no more than the expression discussed above (p. 242), that even the most ideal representation of God which can be constructed from human qualities is not adequate for the great Being, who expresses himself not only in man but also in mighty nature and in the great events of history. The two currents of human thought which, starting from the Reformation and the Renaissance, ruled the mind of the modern world, but mostly in separation from each other—the ideal tendency, directed to the knowledge of our own moral nature, and the real tendency directed to the knowledge of outward nature,—these both appear in Goethe's mighty mind united in a single undivided stream; hence both the idealists and the realists may well go to him, both now and in all future time, for that which each of them requires to learn.

It must be at once acknowledged that this completion of Christian idealism by a healthy realism is separated by a wide interval from the transcendental supernaturalism of the Christianity of the ancient church and of the middle ages, and we can very well understand Goethe's calling himself "a pagan," even in his later period. But why should this realistic attitude of Goethe's, an attitude of friendship with nature and the world, be thought alien to Protestant Christianity? Does it not directly continue the line taken up at the Reformation, which found its typical expression nowhere more than in the classical Reformation works of Luther? May we not regard it as a sign of a profound affinity between the great poet and the great Reformer that the former speaks so frequently of the latter, and in language of such warm admiration? "We have no idea," he says in the above-mentioned conversation, after some sharp sayings about the Catholic ecclesiastical and traditional system,—"we have no idea how much we owe to Luther and to the Reformation in general. They emancipated us from the chains of mental limitation, and our progressive culture has placed us in a position to go back to the sources and understand Christianity in its purity. We have courage again to stand with firm feet on God's earth, and to feel ourselves in our divinely-endowed human nature. Whatever progress there may

yet be in intellectual cultivation, however much the natural sciences may yet gain in the enlargement of their field and in depth of view, and whatever sweep man's mind may yet be enabled to take, it will never transcend the loftiness and moral cultivation of Christianity, as it glows and shines in the Gospels! And the more vigorously we Protestants advance in noble development, the faster will the Catholics follow us. As soon as they feel the great and spreading enlightenment of the age touching them, they must follow, in spite of whatever attitude they take up, and at last it will come about that all will be one. The miserable sectarianism of Protestantism will also come to an end, and with it hatred and sour looks between father and son, brother and sister. For as soon as the pure doctrine and love of Christ is understood as it is, and becomes part of our lives, we shall feel ourselves so great and free, simply as men, that we shall cease to lay stress on trifles of outward worship. And we shall all come by degrees from a Christianity of the word and of faith to a Christianity of disposition and of conduct."

These truly Protestant words may close our sketch of Goethe's religious views. Yet we would fain not part from the thinker without seeking in the past for some incorporations of his religious ideal. The "Christianity of disposition and conduct" to which we are more and more to approximate, is placed before our eyes by Goethe in two dramatic figures, the most striking of such figures in his works. What is Iphigenia but an incarnation of that Christianity of disposition to which Jesus pointed when he said, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God"? She is the pure and lofty soul who, by the divine power of truth and goodness, softens the rough manners of the barbarians, heals and reconciles the sin- and curse-laden, darkened and bewildered mind of her brother, softens the proud arrogance of men, and takes from their hand the arms they held uplifted, and who, after all this, at last fulfils the decree of the gods, and reverses the old curse of her race? Thus Iphigenia presents to us the truly Christian idea that the pure and good man is a divine instrument from whom an atoning and healing virtue goes out to the world that is entangled in guilt and

error. In Faust, on the other hand, the poet discovers to us the picture of humanity striving and erring, fighting and victorious. He shows us how in man's proud flight, like that of Icarus, towards the goal of likeness to God, his wings fail to support him, and earthly heaviness and weakness cause him to fall into error and guilt. But he also shows that there is a rise from the fall, a redemption from the sorcerer's bonds of the spirit of darkness by the powers of goodness; by *active love*, which never ceases to labour and to strive in the cause of humanity, and therefore is capable of being redeemed by *forgiving love*, which, looking down from above, assists the efforts of every noble member of the spiritual world. Sin and grace—between these two poles of the Christian mystery do the two days' action of the mystery-play of Faust move. It is the broad world-view of Christianity which Goethe the thinker as well as Goethe the poet more and more made his own.

CHAPTER V.

NOVALIS AND ROMANTICISM.[1]

EMANCIPATION of the whole man, with the undivided unity of his powers, from the despotism of an abstract and shallow intellectualism, and the restoration of direct feeling and genial productive imagination to their inalienable rights—such was the object for which the storm-and-stress spirits of the seventies, a Hamann at their head, had fought and striven. Herder, Goethe, and Schiller, had all started from this movement. But in them the muddy ferment had subsided, leaving a clear and fragrant spirit of noble humanity. Herder found in the whole history of man's intellectual life, in the poetry, the language, morals, and religion of all peoples and times the infinitely manifold revelation of God, which his nature, receptive on every side, had thirsted for, and which afforded materials for his impulse towards reproduction and creation. Goethe, as we saw, learned in the study of nature and of Spinoza that quietistic renunciation and withdrawal into himself, in which the "ardent wish, the wild desire," of youth, was laid to rest, and, the eternal divine order of the world being lovingly known and acknowledged, the riper mind of manhood found power to conform to the requirements of good manners and of duty, and to mould his own life to the proportions of moral beauty. What the school of Spinoza and of nature was to Goethe, the discipline of the Kantian philosophy was to Schiller, the acute thought and earnest demands of that system laying a beneficent curb on the exuberance and extravagance of fancy without any injury to its productiveness. While endeavouring to combine the dignity of the moral spirit with the grace of

[1] HAYM, *die romantische Schule*. Berlin, 1870.

the beautiful soul, he met with Goethe, who was going the same road; and their road led them both to the fair world of the Greeks, in the divine and human ideals of which they believed that they had found that perfect and beautiful humanity which they had sought in vain in the world of reality around them.

Thus the object of the storm-and-stress movement, which was to bring to his rights and to help to make actual the whole man in the totality of his several powers, was attained in the classic idealism of Goethe and Schiller. If it became purer in their hands, it also became somewhat more restricted: if it became more intellectual, it also suffered an aristocratic alienation from reality. But legitimate tendencies do not become extinct in history till they have played their part to the close, exhibited everything that is in them, and achieved a full recognition of their claims; and as they always meet with resistance in that which exists, they never reach their goal without showing some energetic one-sidedness, some sharp challenge. Thus the spirit of the epoch of geniality did not attain to rest in classic idealism, and could not do so while the latter proudly withdrew from the roughness of real life to the "realm of shadows." The *hauteur* of the classical movement made it natural that the impulse to genial nature should live again in a second generation, and begin afresh its onset on all that was called illumination, reason and will, discipline and manners. The second movement of this kind was, as might be expected, much more paradoxical, one-sided, and passionate, because less naïve, much more self-conscious, and more learned than the former. Thus arose the "romantic school," as the continuation of the epoch of geniality, and as the reaction of its original spirit of unrestrained inner subjectivity against the æsthetic and ethical limitations of classical idealism. Romanticism is not content to fly from reality to the ideal in poetry alone; it seeks to introduce the ideal into reality; and this, be it remarked, it seeks to do not in the rational way of long and toilsome reconciliation of the one to the other by work in science, politics, and social life, but—and this is the perverted and unhealthy element in this tendency—it desires to see its ideals realised at once, life at once made to correspond to the

ideal of poetic fancy, and hence holds itself authorised without more ado to apply the poetic caprice of fancy as the law of both life and thought. The principle of Romanticism thus consists simply in making fancy absolute; and this at once makes fancy fantastic, because it boldly overleaps the laws and conditions of reality, and sets up as sole norm its own subjective caprice and mood. In the domain of art this principle led to a fresh subversion of the tradition just founded by the classicists, to a new barbarisation, and destruction of discipline and method. In the place of the clear forms of classicism, which were marked by definiteness of outline and full of harmony and purpose, there came once more the indefinite and incomprehensible, the vague and wavy, the uncouth and grotesque, the mystical and magical. Hence the preference for the middle ages, with their chiaroscuro, their combination of depth of feeling with rudeness of manners, of naïveté and reflection, their suggestive myths, tales, and legends, the proud magnificence and the mysterious darkness of their churches, the defiant strength and child-like faith of their knights, the sacred enthusiasm and fantastic adventurousness of their crusades, in short, all that superabundance of strength and want of clearness that were peculiar to the youthful period of Christian Europe. And the preference of Romanticism for the middle ages did not stop short at poetic admiration; it assumed, in conformity with the principle that poetry must govern life, a very practical direction.

> Moonlit night of strange enchantment
> That the mind enthralled dost hold,
> O thou wondrous world of faëry,
> Rise in glory, as of old!

So sang Tieck, the admirable representative of Romanticist poetry, and his wish was fulfilled by no means in poetry alone; it was also fulfilled in life to an undesirable extent, as we may see in the whole reactionary movement of State, church, and society, during the first half of the present century.

The position of unlimited subjectivity leads, on the ground of morals, to unregulated licence, on the ground of religion to mysti-

cism uncontrolled by thought; and these two pass, by a natural logical law, into their opposite, absolute positivism. Of the truth of this, the school of the Romanticists is the classical example. The two Schlegels declared "irony," *i.e.* the arrogance of the Ego founded on nothing but itself, exalting itself above everything objective, and making a jest of the world, and at last of itself also, to be the highest wisdom; they regarded all custom and tradition as dulness, and "Cynicism" as the true and loftier morality. In their regardlessness of everything respectable, they even joked about "the leaden moral Schiller;" and their conceit and self-deception led them to hail their partisans and themselves as the Messiahs of a new mental epoch. In the wretched novel *Lucinda*, Frederick Schlegel, the most impudent of these characters, erected to himself a fitting monument. At a later period he turned Catholic. "In him as well as others," Baur fittingly observes,[1] "this step was the necessary outcome of the license and sensuous pursuit of pleasure, which the Romanticists held both in practice and in theory to be the highest poetry of life—a road which could lead to nothing but such a ruin of their intellectual nature." The general tendency of Romanticism towards Catholicism is explained by the fact "that so abstract an inwardness and subjectivity was forced by its inherent exaggeration towards its opposite, and turned perforce to the most concrete reality that offered itself."

Romanticism entered the field of religion in Friedrich von Hardenberg (called Novalis) and in Schleiermacher. Both these men belonged to circles connected with Herrnhut, and might thus seem predestined to bring the stream of secular culture, of the idealistic philosophy and poetry, to bear on religious life, so as to revive and re-fertilise the effete ecclesiastical Protestantism of their day. Yet only the latter succeeded in this attempt: he started from Romanticism, but thanks to his critical acumen and his manly moral strength he afterwards rose high above it. We may therefore pass him over in the meantime, to return to a more careful study of him in the next section.

[1] *Kirchengeschichte des* 19. *Jahrh.*, p. 59.

Novalis is, if not the most faithful, certainly the most amiable representative of Romanticism both on its weak and on its strong sides. A nature gifted with deep and varied feeling and with rich poetical capacity, he received the first determining impressions of his life from Schiller, when a young student at Jena; and to Schiller he at once attached himself with all the fervent enthusiasm of which his heart was capable. Some years afterwards he came to know Fichte, in whose philosophy he found the basis of his view of the world, and at the same time the moral power which enabled him to recover from the heavy blow which reached him in the death of a dearly-beloved bride. The mournful religious yearning for the other world, awakened in him by this sad experience, was combined in Novalis with the transcendental idealism of Fichte and the poetical idealism of Schiller, to form a quite peculiar mixture of philosophic, religious, and poetic mysticism, which he himself very happily called "magic idealism." To him as to Fichte the Ego is the absolute creative power; but this Ego is not with Novalis, as with Fichte, the purely reasonable will which makes itself objective in the moral world-order: it is pure fancy, which credits itself with possessing the magic power of replacing the common world of reality with the fairy world of imagination. He believes that as our entry into this earthly existence was dependent on the resolve of our will, so we can by mere inner direction of the will to such an end, bring about our death: and that the continuation of our flight in other spheres depends solely on the unchanging tendency of our free will. But all present experience is magic too in his view, and only to be explained by magic; all conviction he holds to depend on the truth of miracle, all knowledge is faith, and all faith is will putting forth the miraculous power: the magic idealist is he who can both make thoughts into things and things into thoughts, and has both operations in his power. That this mysticism is nothing but the ethical idealism of Fichte turned energetic and fantastic, we may see every here and there in casual utterances of profound and purely moral truth. "The true cultivation of our will is accompanied *pari passu* by the cultivation of our ability to act and of our knowledge. At that moment at which we are entirely moral,

we shall be able to do miracles, *i.e.* when we do not wish to perform any miracles, or at most those of a moral kind. The loftiest of all miracles is a virtuous action, an act of free determination. The possibility of magic rests on love. Love acts magically. . . . We may if we choose look on life as a fair and genial illusion, as a splendid play; so that even here we may be in spirit in absolute satisfaction and eternity. . . . The mysterious way goes inwards; within us or nowhere is eternity with its worlds, the past and the future." But this ethical idealism constantly passes with Novalis into the magical, in the proper sense of the word: he is not content with moral miracles, with the moral rule of the will over the body, over life, over the world: this changes in his hands into a power of enchantment belonging to genius, and having at its disposal, absolutely and unconditionally, both human and external nature. That our mind should be in time bound, in regard to its outward acts, to the laws of nature, *e.g.* of mechanics, he regards as an unnatural arrangement which can only exist for the time, and will be changed in the future.

In this "magic idealism" we have the key to enable us to understand Novalis's religious view of the world.[1] That expansive Ego which works miracles by its moral power, by its heart, its love, but also by its fancy, becomes enlarged in his hands to the absolute Ego, which alone is "the true Ego," and of which our so-called Ego is only a reflection. This Ego of a higher kind is related to the individual, as man to nature or the sage to the child. Man yearns to be made like to it, as he seeks to make the not-me like to himself. To the great Ego, the ordinary I and the ordinary Thou are but a supplement; we are not Ego yet at all, but we can and must become Ego; we are germs for Ego to grow out of. We are called to change everything into a Thou, a second Ego; and only by doing so do we raise ourselves to the great Ego, which is at once one and all. It is of this that we receive revelations in all lofty ideas and genial inspirations, and with which we stand in a real intercourse, in mutual contact.

[1] He nowhere gives a connected exposition of it, and we have to gather it from disconnected passages in the *Fragmente* (3d section. Views on "Morals"). Writings, ii. 172 *sqq.*

So soon, then, as the divine Ego manifests itself to us immediately in our heart as an ideal sensation, as love, and is contemplated by us as the prototype of our own ideal existence, so soon, Novalis does not hesitate to say, religion arises, while the heart, as the "religious organ," withdrawn from all particular actual objects, feels itself, makes itself an ideal object. All absolute feeling, he holds, is religious; all our inclinations appear to be nothing but religion in application, for all particular inclinations converge in one, the wondrous object of which is a higher being, a deity; and hence the true fear of God comprises all feelings and inclinations. In such utterances, Novalis might appear to agree precisely with Schleiermacher's *Discourses on Religion;* but in other directions he indicates a disagreement with that writer which is somewhat remarkable. Schleiermacher, he says, promulgates a kind of art-religion, almost a religion like that of the artist, who worships beauty and the ideal. But artistic refinements can have no place in religion, since it rests on love, and love is free, and seeks first for the poorest and the most necessitous. Loveless natures are also irreligious. God takes the part of the poor and of sinners, and God also must be conceived, if we are to love him, as in need of help. "Sympathy with the Deity" he states to be the task, and infinite sorrow the character, of religion. We may perhaps formulate this difference in this way: Schleiermacher and Novalis both make religion consist in feeling, but the former thinks essentially of æsthetic feeling, such as goes with quiet contemplation, the latter of practical feeling, such as originates in impulse, and therefore has a partly moral, partly pathological character. Schleiermacher's religious feeling is substantially the same as Spinoza's intellectual love of God, that of Novalis is partly the moral feeling of Fichte, and partly the closely allied pathological feeling of Feuerbach and Schopenhauer. It agrees with this, that Novalis states the organ of the religious view of the world to be the "moral sense," that he requires that a system of morals should be a system of nature, and that finally he says of the notion of God, that "it is a mixed notion, arising from the combination of all the emotional powers by means of a moral revelation." This statement (which is certainly an

excellent one), Schleiermacher could not have adopted, while Fichte could.

Novalis's view of the history of religion, on the other hand, is based upon a thought which is quite in the spirit of Schleiermacher: that man cannot stand in an immediate relation to the Deity, but requires some intermediate link to connect him with Deity; and that while everything or anything will serve to take the place of such a mediator or organ of deity, the nature of the choice made determines, in each case, the character of the religion. The more independent man becomes, the more does the intermediate agent lose in quantity, while its quality, on the other hand, grows finer, and the relations to it more complex and more cultivated: fetishes, stars, animals, heroes, idols, gods, a God-man. The nature of a religion depends less on the nature of the intermediate in itself than on the view we take of it, the relation we assume towards it. As it is false religion to have no mediator at all, it is idolatry, in the wider sense, to regard the mediator as himself God. Between these two extremes lies the true religion "which accepts the mediator as mediator, and regards him as the organ of Deity, as its manifestation to sense." The true religion, again, is divided, according to Novalis's peculiar observation, into Pantheism and Monotheism: by the former he means the idea that all things are the organ of Deity, and may serve as Mediator, I exalting them to that position; by the second, the belief "that there is only one such organ in the world for us, which alone is adequate to the idea of a Mediator, and through which alone God manifests himself, so that I am constrained by my own mind to make choice of it." Incompatible as these two positions seem to be, it is yet possible to harmonise them, if we make the monotheistic mediator the mediator of the intermediate world of Pantheism, and so give it a centre in him, so that each of the two requires the other, though in different ways. Novalis accordingly sees in this the goal of the history of religion, that the Christian system of one mediator should be supplemented by the system of many mediators which obtained in antiquity, and that the latter should find in the former its central and dominating point; and in this he nearly approaches Goethe, who also

would recognise God wherever and in whatever way he manifests himself, and while finding in Christ the highest moral revelation of God, also refuses to overlook the revelation in nature and in the general history of the world—in sun and stars, in heroes and sages.

The Greek religion, Novalis says, was the religion of art: the religion of this people arose out of their artistic sense, and it was in art that the revelation of the Deity reached them; hence this religion seems to him to have an aristocratic tendency, as its mythology seems calculated only for the more cultivated. Christianity, on the contrary, Novalis holds to be distinguished by its democratic popularity: it proceeds from the common man, and blesses the great majority of those who are depressed on earth, it addresses itself merely to the good-will in man, and attaches value to this alone, man's true nature, apart from any (intellectual) cultivation. It interests itself most of all in sinners and the wretched; sin appeals more strongly than anything else to the love of the Deity; the Christian revelation has brought about the destruction of sin, this ancient burden of humanity, and of all belief in penance and propitiation. In Christ, the great martyr of our race, martyrdom itself has been made sacred: his history is as certainly a poem as a history; it is a genuine world-historical symbolical drama, tragical and yet unspeakably mild. The sacred history has also a great similarity to a Märchen: first, there is sorcery (sin), then the miraculous atonement, the fulfilment of the condition of the curse, and so on. The Holy Spirit is more than the Bible: it must be our teacher of Christianity, and not the dead, earthly, ambiguous letter. Every sermon is a result of inspiration, it must be, it can only be, free and genial: it must not be a monotonous contemplation of God or of Jesus; but must be "pantheistic" (in the sense above explained), *i.e.* must contain applied, individual religion. God must be sought among men; in human occurrences, thoughts, and emotions, the spirit of heaven reveals itself most clearly. In religious meetings every one should stand up and communicate sacred history to the rest out of the treasures of his experience: this religious waiting on the sun-rays of the other world is one of the chief requirements of the religious man. As everything can be made the subject

of an epigram, so everything can be turned into a proverb, a religious epigram, a word of God. Attention to God, and watchfulness for those moments in which the ray of a heavenly conviction and consolation fall upon our soul, this is the most useful habit a man can have for himself and for those dear to him. True faith consists just in this apprehending of the occurrences of a higher world, and hence is also supernatural and miraculous.

Religion in this sense, Novalis holds, and we cannot be surprised at this, is to be looked for anywhere rather than in the ecclesiastical Christianity of the present day. "There is as yet no religion, a school for the cultivation of true religion is still to be founded," so he says with particular reference to Schleiermacher's discourses, in which he also discerns the rustling of the wings of a new religious spirit. But—and this is extremely characteristic of the contrast between the poetical, uncritical mysticism of the "magic idealist" Novalis, and the critical idealism of Schleiermacher—he finds the immediate prototype of the ideal religion of the future in the Catholicism of the middle ages! The glorification of this system takes up the greater part of the Essay: Christendom or Europe (1799) which was originally intended for Schlegel's *Athenæum*, but was suppressed at Goethe's wish, and only saw the light in the fourth edition of Novalis's works.[1] It is distinguished by an incredibly naïve absence of criticism, a contemptuous depreciation of sound reason, and a continual oscillation between the most primitive superstition and modern culture, nay, outspoken infidelity, and with all this is so remarkably characteristic, not only of Novalis but of the religious standpoint, or rather want of standpoint, of romanticism in general, that we must speak of it a little more particularly.

Those were happy and splendid times—so Novalis fables—when Europe was one Christian land, inhabited by a united Christendom, and bound together by one common interest, and when the great forces of politics were directed and combined by one head. A child-like confidence subsisted between the laity and the clergy, those chosen men endowed with miraculous powers, who as children of heaven

[1] Works, i. pp. 189-208.

diffused manifold blessings. Under their guardianship men could look on all storms as without danger, and could reckon on a safe landing on the shores of their true fatherland. They breathed peace where they went; they preached nothing but love to the holy and supernaturally beautiful lady of Christendom, who being gifted with divine powers was prepared to save every believer from the most terrible dangers. In the relics of saints the divine grace and power manifested itself by splendid miracles and signs. To such images and tombs as were possessed of special grace men hastened from every quarter, bringing gifts and taking away with them in return the heavenly gifts of peace of mind and health of body. The wise head of the church properly set himself against impious developments of human faculties at the expense of religion, and premature and dangerous discoveries in the field of knowledge. Rome had become Jerusalem, the sacred residence of the divine government on earth. How beneficent this government was, and how well suited to man's inner nature, appeared from the mighty uprising of all the other human powers, the harmonious development of all talents, the immense height to which individuals attained in sciences and arts, the flourishing state of commerce in all parts of Europe, etc. To this bright picture of the Catholic middle ages a contrast is provided in a dark picture of Protestantism, as Novalis understands it. The great inner disruption of the Reformation, this "terrible insurrection," is to his eyes a striking proof of the destructive influence of culture on the sense of the invisible, which, if it does not destroy, it at least dims and impairs. It is true that the insurgents made an end of mischievous traditions and introduced many laudable things, but they sacrilegiously tore themselves away from the general Christian community, in which and through which alone a true and lasting regeneration was possible. Novalis judges Luther to have dealt with Christianity capriciously, to have misunderstood its spirit, and introduced another letter and another religion, namely, the universal authority of the Bible, by which philology is mixed up with religion, and the Holy Spirit's work of inspiring and revealing made immensely more difficult. Hence it is, in Novalis's

opinion, that the history of Protestantism no longer exhibits magnificent supernatural phenomena; only the beginning of it shines with a transient heavenly fire; its religious insight decreases afterwards in a marked way; the world gains the upper hand; religion, irreligiously confined in State bonds, loses its great cosmopolitan peace-making influence; in short, "the Reformation made an end of Christianity; from that time onward there was no such thing in existence!" In such circumstances our romanticist cannot but regard the rise of the order of the Jesuits as a piece of genuine good fortune —an order which he warmly admires as a truly model community. The more must he condemn the "modern way of thinking" which appeared on the emergence of the nations from their pupillarity; it goes by the name of philosophy or enlightenment, he says, but it is rooted in a hatred of religion, which by natural consequence extends to all things which are objects of enthusiasm, suffuses with heresy fancy and feeling, morals and love of art, future and past, makes of the creative music of the universe the monotonous clacking of a great mill, destroys every trace of what is holy, divests the world of all its many-coloured adornment, makes God an idle spectator of a great pathetic drama for the learned, etc. But the very events which, sprung from this modern unbelief, threatened to complete the destruction of religion (the French Revolution and what came after it) are, according to Novalis's conviction, the most favourable symptoms of its regeneration. "Actual anarchy is the generative element of religion. From the destruction of everything positive it exalts its glorious head as a new founder of the world."

And now, arrived in his historical sketch at the most recent reaction, that of romanticism, against the Illumination, the panegyrist of the middle ages and of Jesuitism becomes all at once the equally enthusiastic herald of all the ideal interests of culture! In the sciences and arts, he boasts, a powerful ferment is going on. An immense amount of intellect is being developed; material is being quarried from freshly discovered strata. Never were the sciences in better hands; an unparalleled many-sidedness, a wonderful depth, a brilliant polish, comprehensive acquirements, rich and powerful fancy,

are often to be found united in bold combination. These are nothing but preliminary signs, but they reveal to the historical eye the commencement of a new humanity, the approach of a new golden age with dark unfathomable eyes, of a prophetic time that will work wonders and heal wounds, that will give comfort and will kindle eternal life; of a great time of atonement and of a Saviour whom believers will be able to discern under numberless forms, as bread and wine, as love and air, as word and song, yea even as death. From this cheering height the Illumination itself is again judged less severely: its delusion now appears as a useful means towards a higher truth; those anchorites in the deserts of the understanding, those philanthropists and encyclopædists, are invited to a meeting at which peace shall be declared, to receive the kiss of brotherhood; they are only to divest themselves of the grey net of their intellectual view, and with fresh young love to regard the miraculous beauty of nature, history and humanity. As mystagogue for these new rites of initiation, there is recommended to them a brother, who has made a new veil for the holy one (religion), which clings to and reveals her heavenly form, and yet conceals her as chastely as possible: it is Schleiermacher (veilmaker), in whose *Discourses* Novalis discerns "the beating of the mighty wings of an angelic herald passing by."

The rejuvenated religion of the epoch whose approach Novalis thus foretells, is one of extraordinary breadth; there is room in it for delight in all religion and for faith in mediatorship generally, that is to say, in the capacity of all earthly things to be the bread and wine of eternal life—all this in addition to faith in Christ, his mother, and the saints. It is indifferent which of these "forms of Christianity" one chooses, in any of them one may be a Christian, and member of a church which is one, eternal, and possessed of unspeakable felicity. Out of a venerable European council Christendom will rise again to set about the work of the revival of religion in accordance with a perfectly comprehensive divine plan. In that day no one will protest any more against the cramping influence of Christianity or of the world, for the essence of the church will be genuine freedom, and all necessary reforms will be instituted and carried out under its guid-

ance as friendly and regular civil suits. This universal visible church will receive into its bosom all souls that thirst after what is above the world; but it will be a founder of peace for the world of the nations too, for only a spiritual power which is at the same time worldly and above the world can solve the problem of bringing the conflicting world-powers into equilibrium with each other. At that time the peoples of Europe will awake to a sense of their fearful madness, and will return with softened hearts to the deserted altars: the sacred age of eternal peace will dawn, in which the New Jerusalem (Rome) will be the capital of the world.

What are we to say of this philosophy of history of romanticism, which combines so much intellect and feeling with a still greater amount of what is fantastic and sophistical; which exalts the middle ages and extols Jesuitism, condemns the Reformation as an insurrection and revolt, and modern culture as hatred of religion and anarchy, and then again glorifies the boldest flight of the modern spirit in science and art as having made an end of the old mediæval world of ghosts, and practically asserted the holiness of nature, the infiniteness of art, the necessity of knowledge, the worthiness of the secular world, and the omnipresence of what is truly historical? As if all this had not been the fruit just of the Reformation and of the free Protestant spirit, as Goethe so clearly perceived and warmly acknowledged (p. 258). And, besides, this ideal of the future drawn by romanticism, which considers the peace of the nations and personal freedom to be best protected by the rule of a hierarchy over the world, is by no means so innocent and harmless; naïve and absurd it certainly is, but it in fact contained the programme of the theocratic and reactionary politics which weighed so long and so fatally on Germany, and the remoter effects of which are still in many ways to be felt in that country. And the other romanticists did draw practical consequences of such a kind from the position, some more, some less explicitly: a step from which Novalis himself was preserved by the pure and lofty ideality of his childlike piety and his poetic naïveté. With him the tendency to Catholicism was never any more than a light play of poetic fancy; it had not, as in the case of the

Schlegel, any deeper root in errors of heart and character. At the bottom of his heart Novalis was and remained a good Herrnhutist Christian, and therefore also a Protestant Christian, who acknowledged in the Holy Spirit the sole unerring teacher of Christendom, and who found in a hearty love to the Saviour the centre of his inner life and the autonomous law of his free personality. Nowhere is there any sweeter or more powerful expression of that warm and hearty inwardness of Protestant mysticism which manifested itself in pietism and exercised so precious and salutary an influence on the religion of the German people, then stiff and frozen from the hands of Supranaturalists and Rationalists alike, than in the spiritual songs of Novalis. They are the true song of songs of pious love to the Saviour, and express the whole gamut of its feelings from the deepest sorrow to the highest blessedness and joy: "If I can but have Him, If He be but mine,"—"Though all prove faithless, yet will I be true,"—"Ever see I Him thus suffer—ever fasting thus in prayer,"—"I say to each man, that He lives,"—"What had I been apart from Thee, Apart from Thee what were I now?"—he who gave the Protestant Church these hymns, which belong to the most precious jewels of the religious poetry of all ages, he surely, Romanticism notwithstanding, was a good evangelical Christian.

SECTION III.

THE SPECULATIVE PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION.

CHAPTER I.

JOHANN GOTTLIEB FICHTE.[1]

FICHTE'S philosophy of religion has always appeared to me to be one of the most interesting and instructive parts of the history of this discipline. In the several phases it passed through it represents the most opposite aspects of the religious speculation of modern times, but all in such a way as clearly to exhibit the inner necessity in obedience to which that thought has been so markedly transformed and has made such progress. He who knows Fichte well, and has followed with interest the transition which took place in him from the attitude of criticism to that of speculation can scarcely doubt that it is impossible to stand still at Kant, and that we must either go back to the pre-Kantian empiricism and scepticism, or advance from him to a speculative reconciliation of realism and idealism, in which negative or sceptical criticism yields to the criticism which is positive or speculative, which interprets the phenomena of history from their transcendental principle, the nature of mind, as well as the nature of mind from the phenomena of history.

Fichte, it is well known, introduced himself to the learned world as a disciple of Kant, in a work which he wrote for this purpose: *A Criticism of all Revelation* (1792). This work was noteworthy as being the first application of Kantian principles to the sphere of religion, Kant's own philosophy of religion not yet having made its

[1] F. Zimmer, *Fichte's Religionsphilosophie.* Berlin, 1878. J. Websky, *Fichte's Religion.* Ein Vortrag. Prot. Kirchenzeitung, 1882, No. 12.

appearance. The point of view of the work accordingly is simply that of Kant. Religion is defined as the representation of the moral law under the form of a divine command; such a mode of presentation serves to protect and reinforce the moral law and facilitate its victory over the inclinations which oppose it. Supposing, however, that mankind ever fell into such a depraved state that the force of the moral law was not only weakened by sensuality, but entirely suppressed, then the moral sense would have to be awakened and founded in humanity again, and the only way in which we can conceive of this being done is that the moral law should be announced in a supernatural proclamation of God, or by revelation. Now, the contents of such a revelation can never be anything else than what is already given in the rational nature of man, namely, the universal moral and religious consciousness of laws of goodness and of God as a holy lawgiver. That this element, which has formed part of the mind of man from the beginning, should address him in the form of a supernatural divine communication, this is in certain circumstances a very intelligible phenomenon of human experience, to be explained from that discord between reason and too powerful sense in which man is estranged from himself, from his true being, and can only conceive of it as another being coming to him from without. Here Fichte expressly adds that it must be left to theoretical reason to inquire what may be the actual basis of fact in connection with an event which has come to be represented as a divine proclamation, and that very possibly what appeals to the imagination as an immediate supernatural event, may afterwards come to be recognised as an event which in point of form is perfectly natural, though what is conveyed in it is supernatural, because pertaining to the supersensuous world of freedom. We see that Fichte here stands, as to the question of the objective reality of a revelation claiming to be supernatural, pretty much at the *non liquet* of Kant. Yet even here there is an indication of the progress beyond Kant which is to follow; Fichte leaves the question as to the essence of the revelation an open one, but he is feeling his way to declaring the subjective belief in revelation to be in certain circumstances a natural and necessary pheno-

menon of the human mind, thus pointing significantly to the part played by imagination in reconciling the conflicting claims of our sensuous and our intellectual nature.

The decisive step beyond Kant was made by Fichte in his *Theory of the Sciences.* This work he considered to be no more than a correct exposition of Kantian doctrine; and it did in fact draw those consequences from it which alone remained if that scepticism was to be escaped from, which Aenesidemus Schulze had proved to be the direct result of the ambiguous nature of the Kantian principles. Fichte quite agreed with the acute critics of Kant in thinking that the supposition of a thing in itself, different from the Ego, unknowable by us and yet the origin of all our sensation and our materials of knowledge, was "the most adventurous and absurd combination of the grossest dogmatism and the most thoroughgoing idealism," a half measure and a self-contradiction which, there was no doubt, could only lead back to complete scepticism such as that of Hume, which Kant had laboured to overcome. But Fichte is unable to convince himself that that supposition really expresses Kant's opinion, as his critics took for granted that it did. If Kant really meant to trace sensation to the impression produced by a thing existing outside of us, then Fichte says he would hold the Critique of Pure Reason to be the work rather of a most remarkable piece of chance, than of a head. As against such a half position two positions appear to him to be logical; either we must take for our principle the thing, which is independent of consciousness—this is dogmatism, or we must take consciousness, independent of the thing, and this is idealism. The former is consistently upheld by Spinoza; Fichte seeks to show that Kant must hold the latter. In point of form the two positions are equally possible; and which of the two a man decides for depends, according to Fichte, principally on his character. The free character which rests in itself will choose as the starting-point of its view of the world the Ego, which has its foundation in itself. But as a matter of theory this is the only possible course; for the dogmatist, starting from the thing, never can explain consciousness, and therefore cannot explain knowledge, which he is seeking to obtain, as an activity of his

own; however ingeniously he connects thing with thing in a continuous causal nexus, he will never reach a point in this uniform chain at which the thing turns into an idea, where to being and happening there is added a *seeing* of this being and happening, where the *thing* becomes an object for an *intelligence*. This simple truth is in fact the rock on which that one-sided realism, *i.e.* materialism, makes shipwreck, and must make shipwreck again and again to all eternity.

Thus boldly and resolutely does Fichte cut with the sword the knot of the Kantian philosophy; that fatal thing-in-itself, of which Jacobi very pertinently says that there is no getting into Kant's philosophy without it, and no remaining in that philosophy with it, he disposes of by simply making it the product of the Ego, whose productive imagination turns upon the self-fixed limit of its activity, and as that limit is set to conscious reflection *beforehand*, regards it as an object given from *without*. On this showing the whole objective world is nothing but the manifestation of the infinitely creative and reflective activity which is the essence of the Ego itself. Thus the idealism of Kant, which stopped half-way and was dim and vacillating, was built up into an idealism which was complete and consistent. But this consistency was purchased, in the first place, by great one-sidedness. The *Theory of the Sciences* starts from the Ego, whose consciousness had been the object of Kant's criticism, *i.e.* from the empirical human Ego, and makes the whole objective world a phenomenon of its consciousness placed there by itself; and the human Ego thus appears as the creator of the world. The paradox is by no means imported into Fichte's Theory of the Sciences by a misunderstanding; it really exists in it, though the way to get rid of this one-sidedness is to be found in it from the first. For if the conscious Ego is never without its counterpart, the Non-Ego, and each of these is the condition of the other, consciousness only coming about when they are confronted with each other, it is natural to conclude, that it is not the case that one of the two members (the Non-Ego, the object) is a phenomenon and product of the other, but that both are a phenomenon and product of a higher Third, which then must be related to both,

the Ego and the world, as the transcendent basis of their existence, and cannot be identical with the subject, the Ego, any more than with the object, the thing. Thus idealism, consistently carried through as subjective, leads by an inner necessity to the objective or absolute idealism, a turn which Fichte himself took at a later time, along with Schelling. It must not be forgotten that this later objective turn is quite a different thing from the original subjective idealism of Fichte, and this appears nowhere more clearly than in the religious speculation of his later contrasted with that of his earlier period.

The former is to be found in the works bearing on the well-known atheism controversy. In the Essay *On the ground of our belief in a Divine government of the world* (1798), Fichte sought to prove, against the sceptical atheism of the Kantist Forberg, that religious belief is an essential element of our reasonable moral consciousness, and so to prove it true; "for what is founded in reason is simply necessary; and what is not necessary is on that very account contrary to reason; our holding the latter to be true is a delusion and a dream, however piously we dream it." He shows first that belief in God cannot be deduced from our sense-consciousness, by means of the inference from the existence and constitution of the world of the senses to a reasonable author of it. The mind, standing under the control of reason and its mechanism, is not capable of such a conclusion. For either we regard the world of the senses from the point of view of the ordinary consciousness, which is also that of natural science, or from the transcendental point of view. In the first case, reason is obliged to regard the world as something absolute beyond which it cannot go: it must regard the world as an organised and organising whole, which contains the grounds of all its phenomena in itself, in its own immanent law. An explanation of the world from the ends of an intelligence is impossible; for the decrees of an intelligence are notions, and how can these either get themselves transformed into matter (according to the doctrine of creation out of nothing) or produce any effect on matter that is independent and eternal? To this question the first word of a reasonable answer has still to be heard. Regarded, on the other hand, from the transcendental point of view

of the Theory of the Sciences, the world of the senses is the reflection of our own inner activity, and not a world existing independently; but as to that which is not, we cannot ask for the grounds of it, nor can we take for granted the existence of anything outside of it which should serve to explain it. If, accordingly, there is no practicable path to lead us from the world of sense to the assumption of a moral world-order, the grounds for the latter must be sought in that which is above sense of which we have immediate knowledge, that is to say, in our consciousness of freedom and of a moral purpose in our lives. This is something absolutely positive and certain beyond which we cannot go for any deeper grounds; but in the immediate certainty of this, all essential belief is involved as its necessary pre-supposition. In so far, that is, as I cannot earnestly and practically believe in my moral calling without taking for granted that my moral aims admit of being realised in the world of sense, in so far does the belief in my freedom and my calling at once and immediately involve the belief that the world of sense is arranged with a view to the ends of freedom. The world appears, regarded from this point, as the "material of our duty rendered sensible;" this is the one essential point to which everything else is related only as means and as phenomena. Now just this *moral order* is the divine, and forms the object of all true faith; hence the only possible confession of faith consists in this: to execute cheerfully and unreservedly the commands of duty at each time, without doubt or calculation as to the consequences. That is the whole, the complete, creed. That living and working order is itself God, we need no other God and can comprehend no other. For the moral order is not a fortuitous thing that requires to be deduced from some ground outside itself; it is itself the absolutely First of all objective knowledge, the ground, unconditioned in itself, of all other certainty. Should we draw an inference from the moral order to its ground in a particular being, and attribute personality to this being, that would not advance us at all, but only involve us in insoluble difficulties. "What do you mean by personality and consciousness? Something that you have found in yourselves, that you have made acquaintance with in yourselves, and have called by this name? But

that you do not think this thing, and cannot think it, apart from limitation and finality, you may learn by a small amount of reflection on the process by which you formed the notion. And you make this being, by attributing to him such a predicate, a finite being, a being like yourselves, and have not thought God, but only magnified yourselves in your thought. You can as little explain the moral order of the world from this being as you can explain it from yourselves; it remains unexplained and absolute as before." Faith, accordingly, is not to ask after a deeper ground, but to be content with what is immediately given and is undoubtedly certain—that there is a moral order of the world, that every rational individual has his definite place assigned him in this order, which counts upon his labour; that each piece of fortune that befalls him, in so far as it is not caused by his own conduct, is a result of this plan, that not a hair falls from a man's head without it, and not a sparrow from the house-top—that every truly good action succeeds and every bad one certainly fails, and that to those who earnestly love good, all things work together for the best. But as undoubtedly as this is true, it is also true on the other side that the notion of God as a separate substance is impossible and self-contradictory.

Fichte worked out these ideas further in his *Appeal to the Public against the Charge of Atheism* (1799). Morality and religion, he says here, are absolutely one; they are both a laying hold of that which is above the senses, the former by acting, the latter by believing, and here it is more mischievous than ever to take the philosophical distinction as to the way of looking at things to represent a real difference in the things themselves. As soon as man rises to the pitch of willing duty for duty's sake he transports himself to the world of the supersensuous, and the certainty and the spirit of this other world are at once impressed on him: the liberation of the will which he thus purchases for himself becomes the means and the earnest of the liberation of his whole being; for he then sees that all things of sense are but the reflection of that which is above sense, mere means to the fulfilment of duty; they cease to be to him ends in themselves. In this his immediate relation to the world of the

good, man has God, but there is no reason for assuming a being of God outside and behind this relation—unless it were that it were held desirable for the sake of sensuous gratification to have a God who was substantial and capable of being deduced from the world of sense. And this, Fichte thinks, was certainly the case with his opponents and accusers: because their heart is satisfied with sensuous things, their thought also refuses to rise above a sensuous and gross dogmatism. "Their God is the giver of all enjoyments, the distributor of all happiness and unhappiness to finite beings; that is the basis of his character. He who seeks after enjoyment is a sensuous, a carnal man, who has no religion and is incapable of any; the first truly religious sensation makes an end of desire in us. A God who is to be the minister of desire is a contemptible being, a bad being, for he supports and perpetuates the destruction of men and the degradation of reason. Such a God is in deed and truth the 'Prince of this world,' and his sentence has long been spoken by the lips of truth. What they call God is to me an idol; they are the true atheists; what they call atheism is that I refuse to recognise their idol instead of the true God."

Here we recognise a paradoxical one-sidedness similar to that of the *Theory of the Sciences*. His attack on his opponents is not fair, when he represents their view of a personal extra-mundane God as necessarily based on a sensuous mode of thinking, and not combined, indeed incapable of being combined, with a pure and practical piety. Here we see a weak side of Fichte: it was difficult for him to place himself within the views of others, to regard these views without prejudice, or to do them justice. In his own case thought and character were one, and he dealt with purely theoretical differences in others as if they arose out of errors in character. But his positive antithesis was one-sided too. The "moral order" which he here proclaims as the divine, is, after all, nothing more than a formal principle, a law which as such cannot possibly exhaust the idea of God. Abstract from sense as we may in framing our idea of God, it must always be thought in one way or another as a real principle of all finite existence and of the moral life of man as well. An absolute

formal principle by the side of which positive reality pertained to the human Ego alone, cannot be logically thought at all. Fichte himself came to recognise this in the clearest way at a later period, and characterised his earlier point of view as a subordinate view of the world, which both true religiousness and philosophy must far transcend. And we are certainly not mistaken, if we regard as the cause of this later change, in addition to the inner dialectical reasons which lay in the *Theory of the Sciences* itself, this very atheism controversy which gave Fichte occasion to seek for a truer account of the relation of the human Ego to the essence of God, than he had at first attained.

From his earlier paradoxical and uncompromising position Fichte soon returned (in his *Reminiscences, Answers and Questions*, 1799) to a more reasonable view. Specially important here is the sharp distinction he drew between religion itself as a practical life and the theory of religion, whether theological or philosophical. The philosophy of religion may, and must at times, Fichte holds, come in conflict with theology as the positive doctrine of religion; but for all that it is far from being in conflict with religion itself, with the living religious feeling of men. "Religion, it is true, is the business of all men, and every one has a right to take part in the discussions and controversies regarding it. But the philosophy of religion is not religion, and is not for all, nor for the judgment of all; religion is active and energetic, the theory by itself is dead. Religion fills a man with feelings and emotions, the theory only speaks about them, and neither destroys them nor seeks to produce fresh ones." From this he deduces a rule for the religious education of the people, that it must not start with theoretical instruction, but with the cultivation of the heart with a view to pure virtue and morality. There is to be no teaching about the being and nature of God, but only about his relations to us, his acts; and religious instruction in general is not to put into men anything new, but only to develop and revive what they have in them already.

The subjective idealism of Fichte deepened into an objective idealism, which has also been called ethical Pantheism. This we first meet with in the work on *The Vocation of Man* (1800), which was written immediately after Fichte's change to Berlin. He sets out

with the assertion, that neither the appearances of things to the senses, nor knowledge derived from reasoning, can lead us to the true view of the world. The former, he says, tends to make us think that nothing is real but Nature, and robs us of our personal freedom and dignity, degrading us to merely natural beings and members, destitute of freedom, of the mechanism of Nature; the latter does away with the reality of Nature and makes it a mere reflection of our consciousness, but it does away, at the same time, with the reality of our own Ego, makes self-consciousness also a mere dream, and reducing all life to one great illusion, robs it of all true significance and value. From this shipwreck of all real knowledge, we can only be saved by recognising a higher reality, by *faith*, a thing which does not spring from the understanding but from the disposition, and belongs to the conscience, not to wit and argument. Conscience, in prescribing to us our calling to act morally, requires the assumption of a real world of independent beings to whom and with whom we are so to act. "My world is the object and the sphere of my duties, nothing else. Practical reason is the root of all reason." The world of the senses, which is the immediate object of our acts, and the medium by which free beings act and react on each other, has for its only foundation the agreement in feelings, views, and thoughts of the finite reasonable beings of our race; but this amounts to saying that it is based on the unanimous limitation of reason in these reasonable beings. The philosophy of pure knowledge, we are assured to this day, runs up to this and must come to a stand at this point, being unable to rise any higher. But Fichte takes a decisive step beyond this point, and asks, "What could limit reason but what is itself reason, and what could set limits to all finite reason but infinite reason? This agreement of all as to the world of sense, that it is the sphere of our duty, and must be taken for granted, and need not be disputed about, is as incomprehensible as our agreement regarding the use to be made of our freedom between man and man, and is the result of the one eternal infinite will. Our faith in it, which I regarded above as faith in our duty, is properly faith in Him, in His reason and His faithfulness. Only reason is, the infinite reason in itself, the finite reason in and through

the infinite. Only in our souls does it create a world, or at least that out of which we develop a world, the call to duty, and feelings, views and laws of thought agreed on by all. It is His light in which we see light, and all that the light makes manifest to us. All our life is His life; we are eternal because He is. Exalted living Will which no name can name, no thought embrace, well may I lift my soul to Thee, for Thou and I are not dissevered. Thy voice sounds in me, and mine again in Thee, and all my thoughts, if only they be true and good, are thought in Thee. In Thee, the Incomprehensible, I become comprehensible to myself, and the world grows perfectly comprehensible to me, all the riddles of my existence are solved, and the most perfect harmony arises in my mind." This sounds quite differently from the confession of mere moral doing right. True, Fichte still maintains that the (anthropomorphic) picture made of God by the efforts of the understanding is ridiculous, and to a wise man even abominable, because he knows that we cannot transfer to God our limited consciousness and our personality, the very notion of which involves limitation, without making Him finite, a great man; and, indeed, we cannot and need not know what God is in Himself; His relations and connections to ourselves being clearly before our eyes, for we know that He lives and knows, wills and acts, since our life and moral consciousness and moral power are all His work, the manifestation of His being, the infinite reason which is omnipresent to the finite. In Him we also see the world in a new light: there is no Nature any longer, and no fate but only God: His will, His providence are the higher Nature, in which everything that happens is good, and perfectly serves its end; even evil is but a means at the service of the highest wisdom and goodness, and death only the birth to a new and more glorious life. Thus from this point of view the whole universe appears transfigured: the dead heavy mass is gone, everything is moving with life and power, and all this life is God's life visible to the religious eye in the outer as well as the inner world. "I am akin to Thee, and all I see about me is akin to me; it is all quickened and inspired, looks at me with clear spirit-eyes and speaks to my heart in spirit-tones. Myself, divided and

taken asunder into the richest manifoldness and variety, that is what I see in all the forms outside me; I shine upon myself from them as the morning sun is reflected back to itself, its light broken up into its colours from a thousand dewdrops. Thy life flows, in many ways brought near to sense for the eye of the mortal, down through me to the whole of immeasurable nature." It is but a step from this to the "natural philosophy" of Schelling on the one side and to the philosophy of religion of Schleiermacher's "Discourses" on the other, two works which came into existence at the same time. Can it be that the influence of Schleiermacher and his circle at Berlin had something to do with this change on the part of Fichte? It cannot, of course, be denied that the transition from subjective to objective idealism, and at the same time from moralism to religious mysticism, was a result certain to follow sooner or later from that earlier position in which Fichte was working on Kantian lines; yet we can scarcely be wrong in supposing this development to have been assisted both positively and negatively by the personal impressions he met with in his new surroundings.

These influences assisted his progress negatively as well as positively. Formerly, Fichte had been brought into contact principally with a persecuting orthodoxy, which had provoked him to sharp protests against the traditional positions. He now became acquainted with the shallow and frivolous spirit of the Illumination as it was to be met with in the Berlin of those days, which indeed was its headquarters; a spirit which had parted not only with superstition but with faith, with all deeper conviction, leaving a void which the resources of its philosophy offered no possible means of filling up again. How distasteful this tone of mind was to Fichte we see from the whole collection of discourses on the *Characteristics of the Present Age* (1804). He called the age, as is well known, the epoch of completed sinfulness, because society, in liberating itself from all authority, had at the same time cast away all the reasonable and ideal elements of life and thought. On the religious freethinking of the age, in particular, he uttered a judgment of great severity. In the sixteenth of these lectures we read: "The empty and unedifying

chatter of freethinking has had time enough to utter itself in every way: it has uttered itself, and we have taken knowledge of it, and know that there is nothing new to be said on that side, and that nothing will be said better than it has been said already. We are wearied of it: we feel its emptiness, the nullity of what it gives us in respect of that sense for the Eternal which is found after all to be ineradicable in us. It remains with us, this sense for the Eternal, and cries out with a voice not to be hushed, for something to do, some occupation of its own. A more virile philosophy has sought of late to appease these cries by appealing to another sense, the sense of absolute morality, under the name of the categorical imperative. Many a strong mind has found in this latter teaching encouragement and vigour; but this could only be for a time; in the very process of fostering the allied sense that which is neglected is brought to feel its wants more urgently. When to it in turn the truth shall come, it will, just because it has wanted exercise, and has been trying vain experiments, recognise the truth with the more decidedness, and embrace it with the greater ardour."

From this time accordingly, Fichte marks off true religion in the most distinct way from pure morality, with which at an earlier stage he absolutely identified it. "It never becomes visible, nor does it impel a man to anything he would not have done without it. But it makes him complete in himself, makes him entirely one with himself, and entirely free and entirely clear and blessed; in a word, it completes his dignity." The moral man obeys the command of duty in his breast for no other reason than that it commands; but in doing so he does not know what duty, to which he is offering up his being, really requires, and what the essence of it is. His acts therefore may be ever so perfect outwardly, in appearance; but inwardly, at the root of his being, there is still division, unclearness, unfreedom, and therefore a want of absolute worth. It is religion, religion alone, that unfolds to man the one eternal law, which commands the free man and the noble man as the law of duty, the more ignoble tool as a law of nature; religion makes him know it as the living law of development of the one infinite life. What the moral man called duty and

command is to the religious man the highest spiritual blossom of life, his element, in which alone he can breathe. To him the "shall" of command comes too late; before it commands he wills, and he cannot will otherwise. As all external law disappears before morality, so even the inner law disappears before religion; the lawgiver in our breast is silent, for our will, our pleasure, our love, our blessedness, have taken the law up into themselves. The pains of self-conquest, for the moral man the speechless sacrifice of blind obedience, are to the religious man no longer his own pains, but the pains of a lower nature in revolt against his true self, the pangs of a new birth, which engenders splendid life far above our expectations. He who is consecrated by religion is raised above time and decay, for his life is rooted in the one fundamental divine life, wherefore he has eternal life with all its blessedness, and possesses it at each moment, immediate and entire. To religion thus understood, morality is related as a preparatory stage: "By morality we are first trained to obedience, and in trained obedience love arises as its sweetest fruit and recompence."

Religion being thus described on its practical or mystical side as a *harmonious fundamental disposition of the soul*, Fichte shows in what follows, how this disposition rests on a terrestrial view of the world, which reckons the world and all life in time to be not the true and real existence, but the divided appearance of the divine being, which in itself is one. On this side he goes so far as to say: "Metaphysic —in English, what is above the senses—is the element of religion. From the beginning of the world to this day religion, in whatever form it might appear, was always metaphysic, and he who contemns and ridicules metaphysic (Latin, whatever is *a priori*) either knows not what he is doing, or is contemning and ridiculing religion." Religion is not a doing, an activity; it is a *view*, it is light, and the one true light, which bears in itself all life and all the forming of life, and penetrates it to its inmost core. This once had, right action will take care of itself, for the truth cannot act otherwise than truly; but this right action is no longer a sacrifice, nor a suffering and renunciation, it is the exercise, the going out, of the highest inner felicity."

These sentences certainly contain very pertinent truths, and come infinitely nearer the distinctive essence of religion than the former identification of it with moral action, yet they are far from clear. Religion is associated so closely with metaphysic, theory, thought about the world, that the distinction between it and science is in danger of being lost sight of. Its boundaries on this side as well as on the other are laid down by Fichte with greater distinctness only in his work, *The Way to the Blessed Life* (1806).

In the opening lecture of this series the notion of the blessed life is discussed: life, love, and blessedness are simply one and the same. Show me what you truly love, what you seek and strive after with all your soul, when you hope to find the true enjoyment of yourself, and you have given me the key to your life; what you love, you live. This love is just your life, the root, the seat, the centre, of your life. Whatever else stirs in you is life only so far as it is directed to this one centre. But the true life is nothing but life in unity with the true, one and unchangeable being, life in God, the love of God; whereas the love of the world, life in that element which is changing and apparent, is a mere show of life, that always seeks and hurries after satisfaction without ever really finding it in the finite. Now the eternal can only be grasped by thought; the true life consists in thought, *i.e.* in a certain definite view of ourselves and of the world as proceeding from the inner, and in itself concealed, divine Being. "Only to the highest flight of thought (speculation) comes the Divinity; with no other sense can it be grasped;" not by mere feelings and sensations, for these depend on circumstances, and are vague and transitory; nor yet to moral actions, for the true virtue which freely produces what is good none can attain who does not love and embrace the Deity in clear notions. This true view of ourselves and of the world in the unchangeable divine Being, this and nothing else is "faith," on which Christianity too makes salvation depend. Only after this true faith had disappeared out of the world was the blessed life made to depend on virtue as its condition, "good fruit being thus sought on a wild tree." But this embracing in thought of the eternal and divine is by no means a

merely theoretical act with Fichte, as we see from his describing the way to this true thinking quite as a religious conversion, a being born again. The first condition of it is the withdrawal of our love from the manifold to the one. The objects of our love must pale and disappear that we may receive them back again beautified and transfigured in the ether of the new world that is to dawn on us. The finite must die: "it is ever dying in its shadow-life, but when the true life begins it dies in that one death once for all, all the deaths which in its shadow-life await it."

This Way to the blessed life we see offers us a sort of doctrine of salvation in the medium of philosophy of religion. And as dogmatic analyses the process of salvation into a number of stages and forms of religious experience succeeding one another in a definite order, so Fichte distinguishes the various modes of the practical and the theoretical view of the world as so many stages of the mental development of mankind.

The *first* way of regarding the world, the lowest and most superficial of all, is that which regards the phenomena of sense as the true and the highest being (theoretical and practical materialism). The *second* view regards the world as a law of order and equal right in a system of reasonable beings, and sees just in this ordering law, in the imperative which commands and forbids, the true and real, the ground and end of the world of appearances; this is the point of view of the Kantian philosophy as apprehended by Fichte, and made the basis of his own "Doctrine of Law" and a Doctrine of Morals (when he adds that for all that he never regarded it as the highest view of the world, he is obviously mistaken). The *third* view is that which is taken from the platform of the true, the higher morality. Here also a law for the world of minds occupies the first and highest place, and is reckoned the absolutely real; but it is a law which does not merely ordain, but creates, which has in view not merely the form of the idea, as in the latter case, but the real idea itself, since it lays hold of humanity, and so labours to make it a copy and a revelation of the inner divine being. By this higher morality alone did religion (especially the Christian religion), wisdom

and science, law and civilisation, art, and whatever is good and honourable, come into the world. Of the philosophers a Plato and a Jacobi may have had presentiments of it and have come near to it, but it is to be found chiefly in the poets. The *fourth* view is that of religion, which recognises the holy, the good, and the beautiful, as the full and the only appearance in us of the nature of God. According to this view God alone is, and beside him nothing is (that is of course in the absolute sense of "being"); we are his immediate image, the world is his mediate image, interpreted, that is to say, by our consciousness, on the reflecting surface of which the one divine life appears broken up in a multiplicity of things, as the one light in the prism is broken up into a number of coloured rays. Thus because in the reflection of our consciousness we see the one only as the many, as the world of phenomena, what we see everywhere is not God, but only the vesture of God, whether it be called material thing or ideal law, law of nature, or law of conduct; in each case it is not Himself, "the form ever conceals from us the essence, our seeing itself hides the object we see, our eye itself impedes our eye." Yet this only applies to the empirical point of view, to that way of looking at the world which cleaves to the particulars (whether sense-perception or rational reflection, which also merely passes discursively from one point to another). But "only raise thyself to the point of view of religion, and all wrappings disappear, the world passes away for thee with her dead principle, and the Deity itself enters thee again in its first, its primal form, as life, as thine own life, which thou must live and art to live!" The multiplicity of outward phenomena remains, it is true, for the empirical consciousness, but it is now known for what it is, as the unsubstantial reflection of the One divine being in the mirror of thought; while the true being, the immediate and vigorous life of God, is now seen to be man's own holy living and loving. "Wilt thou see God, as He is in Himself, face to face? Seek Him not beyond the clouds; thou canst find Him everywhere, where thou art. Look on the life of those devoted to Him, and thou seest Him! Give thyself to Him, and thou findest Him in thine own breast."

If religion thus beholds in all the manifold of the world the manifestation of the one divine life, science (in its completion as philosophy) adds as the *fifth* and last stage the knowledge of the *Quomodo* of this connection: it changes faith into sight by deducing genetically that which is for religion a mere absolute fact. Piety itself, the divine, the blessed life, does not depend on science; its superiority consists merely in its greater clearness of conviction. And if religion has this in common with science, that it is not immediately active, but contemplative, a restful view which remains in the inner part of the soul and does not directly impel us to any definite action, on the other side it has this feature peculiar to itself, that it does not limit itself to contemplation but passes into practical energy, into the will to carry out all and every task we have as the will of God for us and in us. Thus religion is "the inner spirit which penetrates all our thought and action—which go on without any interruption—with its own vigour and bathes them in its own life."

Here Fichte must be allowed to have risen to a very high and pure conception of religion. At this point he neither regards it as identical with moral action (as at first), nor as identical with metaphysical thought (as he did later): it is rather a higher or deeper element, related to both as the "inner life-giving spirit" and harmonising unity. It is our immediate consciousness of our being in God and God's being in us, the feeling of the unity of the divine being in the multiplicity of individual forms of manifestation, into which it has been split up by an original act of reflection. In short, religion is here the *love of God*, and more particularly the mutual love which divides God and us into two, and unites us again in one, in which the divine being and the human existence, or God and man, are one, "perfectly melted and fused together." This love, as Fichte says, quite in the spirit of Spinoza, is "God's own love to Himself in the form of feeling." It is true that the divine is always and essentially in man, and forms the core and the basis of his individual existence, which for this reason is indissoluble, and at death only enters on new metamorphoses. But to the consciousness which is still held captive

at the lower stages of sensuousness or of legalism this divine element is concealed; it does not appear either in action or in feeling as long as man wishes himself to be somewhat; for where personal self-love is, there the love of God is not, there God cannot come to man, man cannot become aware of his unity with God. "But so soon as man abolishes himself, purely, entirely, to the very root, God alone remains and is all in all; man can produce no God for himself, but he can do away with self as the great negation, and then he passes into God." This sounds at first quite like that God-intoxicated mysticism which recognises no reality in the individual life and seeks the end of religion, the happiness it promises, in the cessation of the appearance of such a life, and the departure from the consciousness of the illusion of a separate existence. And Fichte does come at times somewhat dubiously near this acosmistic Pantheism, as when he says in so many words that "all separate being is mere not-being and limitation of true being." The position, moreover, is one which is at no time far from a philosophy which recognises no reality in nature,—and this was true of Fichte in the later as well as the earlier phase of his teaching; for what gives the individual a separate existence is first corporeity, or the limitation of the individual in material respects, in space and time; so that if corporeity is judged to be unessential, to be a mere product of the mind's reflection, then the separate existence of individual minds must also be in danger of being robbed of reality and reduced to a phantom. But this was not what Fichte really meant to teach; the "self-annihilation," which is essential to the entrance into the higher life, signifies merely the ethical act of renunciation of self-love, or of the "own," selfishly limited, will; at the same time with this a man retains the view of himself as a person subsisting independently and living in a world of sense. This view is retained as an unchangeable form of consciousness; and more, the man thus denying self comes for the first time to recognise and lay hold of his peculiar calling, so that he has no wish to be anything but what *he* and *only he*, in virtue of his higher nature, *i.e.* the divine element in him, should be and can be. The renunciation of the false undivine self is just the realisation of the true self, the divine "genius."

Hence the pious love of God of Fichte, though closely allied to that of Spinoza, is yet essentially different from it. Far from being a mere contemplative knowledge of God and quietistic exaltation above the world of action, it is rather the source of the most active, the most cheerful, love of man and work for the benefit of men. If it is vain to say to the man who does not dwell in love, "Act morally," it is superfluous to say so to the man who loves, for in love the moral world arises of necessity; moral action flows from it as quietly and naturally as light seems to flow from the sun, and as the world really flows from the inner love of God to Himself. He who dreams of love without action is self-deceived, deluded with a vain show of love. But the human love of the religious man is not that weakly live-and-let-live which indicates nothing but flatness and nervelessness of mind, and which is without power either to love or hate. It is not concerned about the material happiness of men, and does not seek to make them happy by their outward circumstances, any more than God can wish to make them happy in this way. What he loves in men is only their true being, their being in God, and therefore he hates the being which is limited and undivine. Looking to what men are capable of being, he is filled with holy indignation to see them without worth or honour as they are; and looking to the divine, which in the deepest part of them they all bear, and the profound misery they bring on themselves by their estrangement from the divine of which they have the witness in their minds, he is overwhelmed with sorrow. What he hates is the devilish fanaticism which seeks to make all men as perverted and as worthless as itself. The whole unconquerable power of love is seen in this in the religious man, that whatever want of success, whatever disappointments he meets with, he never gives up working at the elevation of his race. Thus love becomes to him an ever-flowing fountain of faith and hope, not in God or from God, for God is already present and living in his whole being, and he has nothing to hope from Him, but of faith in man and hope from man.

Fichte sums up his description of the blessed life of the religious man in the beautiful and deeply religious words: "In him there is

no fear with regard to the future, for the absolutely Blessed is continually leading him towards it: no penitence for the past, for in so far as he was not in God he was nothing, and that is now over—only since his entry into the Deity is he born into life; and in so far as he has been in God, what he has done is right and good. He never has to deny himself anything or to long after anything, for he possesses always and eternally the whole fulness of all that he is able to embrace. For him labour and effort have disappeared, all that is seen in him flows sweetly and easily from what is within him, and is given out from him without any trouble. In the words of one of our great poets:

> Crystal-clear, serene and bright and even
> Zephyr-light speeds on in heaven
> Time, with the blest Olympian ones;
> Moons wax and wane, nor scapes man dire death's doom,
> Yet aye divinely fresh their roses bloom
> Changeless—while all to ruin runs."

There is a great deal of significance in Fichte's closing his Philosophy of Religion with this citation from Schiller's poem, *Ideal and Life;* there is indeed a very close affinity between the religious morality of Fichte and the æsthetic morality of Schiller. They both start from Kant's ethical idealism; but they both seek to resolve the hard legal dualism of Kant in a higher unity, and in proportion as they transcend Kant they approach Goethe's ideal of fair and harmonious humanity, but without reaching such a unity of mind and nature as Goethe does, or succeeding to the same extent in making the antithesis of the two disappear (p. 250). In respect of his ethical religious principle, accordingly, Fichte stands with Schiller half-way between Kant and Goethe; but in respect of the question of the means of realising the ethical principle in humanity he stands nearer to the two latter than to Schiller. While Schiller considered the morally beautiful to be sufficient for the moral education of mankind, Fichte recognises along with Kant that this end is only to be attained on a general or universal scale by means of a moral community, which being equipped with higher authority may be able to confront the individual as an educative agency. He recognises with Goethe

and Herder that the founding of such a community is the work of higher natures, religious geniuses, in whom humanity justly recognises a revelation of the Deity.

This point Fichte touched on in his *System of Morals* of 1798, in some brief but interesting remarks.[1] He begins with observing that by nature man is in a state of "indolence" or moral enchainment from which he cannot shake himself free by asserting his liberty, because the very power by which he ought to help himself is in league against him; his freedom itself is chained. This is the truth of the dogmatic notion of the *servum arbitrium* of the natural man. How then is help to come to man, in view of this deep-rooted indolence, which renders useless that very power by which he ought to help himself? It is not strength that he wants, but the knowledge of his strength, and the impulse to put it forth. In the case of the greater number this impulse cannot come from within, it must be imparted from without, by personal examples of goodness, beholding which the others see how they themselves ought to be, and are thus lifted up themselves to reverence and love of goodness. But from what quarter are those external impulses to come among men? "As it is possible for every individual, in spite of his indolence, to raise himself above it, it may properly be supposed that of the multitude of men some have actually raised themselves up to morality. These must necessarily regard it as their business to influence their fellow-men. And the result is *positive religion*, which consists of institutions devised by superior men with a view to working on others, and furthering the development of the moral sense. These institutions, moreover, may be surrounded, in virtue of their age or of the extent to which they are used and found of value, with a special authority which may be very serviceable to those who need them. It is very natural that those persons from whose inner life that moral sense was, by a true miracle and not by any natural cause, developed, a moral sense which perhaps they failed to find in any of their contemporaries, should interpret this miracle as wrought by a spiritual and intelligent being outside themselves, and if by 'themselves' they meant their impure

[1] Works, iv. 201-205, 348-351, 241-245.

selves they were quite right. It is possible that this interpretation may have descended to our day: it is theoretically true in the sense here indicated, and even if interpreted less accurately, is quite innocent, if only it be not used as a means for enforcing blind obedience. Each man will attach his faith to it so far as his convictions allow; in practical respects and for most men it is quite indifferent."

Thus the positive religions are institutions of moral heroes for the development of the moral sense in humanity. And Fichte accordingly regards the *church* as the universal moral society, its aim being, by the mutual influence of its members on each other, to produce unanimity among them on matters affecting morality. "All belong to the church, in so far as they have the right moral way of thinking, and all ought to belong to her." It is the special function of the ministers of the church, or the clergy, to perform in the name of all what, in this moral society, is properly the duty of all. To this end they must start from that on which all are agreed, namely, the symbol; but they must also go beyond the symbol to that on which all ought to be agreed; they must "have a grasp of the best and most assured results of the moral culture of their age, and lead the people to it." To this end it is necessary that they should see deeper than the individuals into the meaning of the symbols, and have a more profound, more learned insight into the moral idea. At the same time they must not go too fast, nor betake themselves away from the common consciousness of the others, since in that case they would no longer be speaking to all, or in the name of all, but only in their own. Now they certainly have a right to utter their private convictions in the character of scholars, but their public function as teachers of the people or servants of the State, they must take care to keep separate from such private communications. "For in the sphere in which he is a teacher of the people or an official, he is not a scholar, and where he is a scholar he is not a teacher or official. It would be an oppression of conscience to forbid the preacher to set forth his peculiar views in learned writings; but it is quite right to forbid him to produce them in the pulpit, and if he is properly enlightened it is unconscientious of him to do so." "It is the

bounden duty of every one who has to influence the people with a view to their practical conviction, to treat the symbol as the basis of instruction; it is by no means his duty to believe it in his own heart. The symbol is changeable, and should be undergoing constant change by good, useful, practical teaching. This further progress, this elevation of the symbol, is the very spirit of *Protestantism*, if that word is to have any meaning. To cleave to what is old, to strive to bring the general understanding to a standstill, is the spirit of *Papistry*. The Protestant starts from the symbol, but goes on to the infinite; the Papist goes to the symbol as his ultimate goal. He who does the latter is a Papist in form and spirit, though the contents of the propositions beyond which he desires that mankind should not go should be Lutheran or Calvinistic or of any other creed."

It must be allowed that our philosopher here enunciates very wholesome principles on the subject of church belief and doctrine—principles which are well adapted to reconcile the claims of unity and freedom, of continuity and development, of history and of the individual. His idea of the free developing treatment of church doctrine is very distinctly described in his last work on *The Doctrine of the State, or the Relation of the Primitive State to the Empire of Reason* (1813, posthumously published in 1820).[1] The position here taken up bears a strong resemblance to Kant's moral allegorising of dogmas, but shows a distinctly more profound and more delicate appreciation of the historical substance of Christianity than we find in Kant or in his ordinary followers. Some particulars of this philosophy of Christianity may find a place here; they are less known than they deserve to be.

The fundamental Christian idea of the "kingdom of God" contains, according to Fichte, a new view of God and of man: the former is no longer the arbitrary despotic power he was in the belief of antiquity, but the Holy, determined by its own inner nature, and free from all arbitrariness; and humanity, consequently, is nothing but the freedom of all, called to be in harmony with the divine will. "Thus Christianity is the gospel of freedom and equality, not only in

[1] Works, iv. 521 *seq.*

a metaphysical sense, but in the civil sense as well." This at least is its fundamental principle, and so instead of the blind belief in revelation and authority common to antiquity, it has the belief in the immediate revelation in the individual self-contemplation of each (the communication of the truth to the individuals). In place of the heathen mediatorship between God and man, it has the abolition of all intermediaries, and immediate unity of God and man in the spirit. In place of a human despotic rule, it sets up (regards as the ideal and seeks after) a constitution of such a nature that each man shall only obey the will of God clearly recognised. The sole rule in humanity of the divine will clearly recognised and freely embraced by each, is eternal life in time, and is the *essence*, the ultimate end, of Christianity, for all time. From this we must carefully distinguish the *historical form* of Christianity, as conditioned by its conflict with the prevalent opinions of different ages, and finding herein its explanation.

Historically the kingdom of heaven came into the world when Jesus became conscious of his call to found it as a mission to mankind directly given him by God. He thus became the first citizen of that kingdom, and his example led others to follow him, the idea of the kingdom being represented to their minds in his personal example (as the ideal). The true and only means of salvation is the death of selfishness, to die with Jesus and to be born again. Of this all men should be instructed; but a knowledge of the whole history of this instruction (positive Christian doctrine) contributes nothing further to salvation. "The way to salvation a man must *walk in;* that is the point; the history of the discovery and levelling of the way is good in its place, but does not help us to walk in it. We do not come to Christianity, not even in theory, till that way of salvation is known as the sole and the sufficient one, and the historical element committed as history to the free unfettered understanding." And similarly in another passage: "Only the metaphysical saves, not the historical; the latter only enlightens. Let a man be united to God and turned in to him, and it makes no difference by what road he came to such a point; it would be a very useless and perverted employment, instead of living in the thing, to be constantly repeating the recollec-

tion of the way. Jesus himself, were he now to return to the earth, would be quite content if he found Christianity ruling in men's dispositions, whether his services in the matter were extolled or neglected; this is the least we could expect of such a man; when he was alive he did not seek his own honour." Yet it remains always true that "to the end of the days all wise men will bow reverently before this Jesus of Nazareth, and the greater they are themselves, the more humbly will they recognise the surpassing glory of this great phenomenon." As for the miraculous narratives of the Gospels, Fichte is of opinion that "Jesus did plenty that was miraculous, because he was a man of lofty nature; his whole existence is the greatest miracle in the whole course of the creation; but what are called miracles (in the material world) he did not do, and it was not his wish, it was not his part, to do them, for they quite contradict his notion of God and of the divine kingdom. And in the same way Jesus had no visions, or apparitions, or dreams, or anything of the kind, and did not appeal to such things as the old prophets did. Such things are the arts of sorcerers, and presuppose an arbitrary God." Faith of this kind is nothing but the remoter effect of Jewish and heathen superstition, unworthy of the purity of the Christian belief in God, whose great and unceasing miracle is to create a new heart in all those who draw near to him.

The idea of the doctrine of justification Fichte holds to be, that the rejection of mankind and its exclusion from the communion of God believed to have prevailed before Christianity, and symbolised in the doctrine of original sin, were once for all removed by Jesus from the consciousness of men: this he did by his preaching of the kingdom of heaven, by receiving which in faith each man enters into communion with God. The biblical, especially the Pauline, expressions about the atoning death of Christ are partly to be explained by the fact that the disciples dated the beginning of the kingdom of heaven from the death of Jesus, and partly from the use of symbolical language borrowed from Jewish sacrifice, which has no significance but in the controversy against the old means of atonement. Redemption from sin itself, however, or sanctification, which must be carefully dis-

tinguished from justification as spoken of above, cannot be procured for us by another, but must take place in each man's personal life, in the simple way of self-denial, or dying *with* Christ. Every other "scheme of salvation," whether consisting in historical knowledge or in church exercises, proceeds from the natural self, and is anti-Christian. It is the task of history to see that the form of the belief on authority should more and more disappear, while the substance of it, the kingdom of reason and freedom, in which God is the sole ruling principle of the whole, is increasingly realised. That introduction of Christianity to the world (expected to accompany the "second coming of Christ") is not to be conceived as a single, momentaneous, meteoric occurrence, but may pursue its quiet slow course which the world marks not, just as the pouring out of the Holy Ghost has lasted and will still last for centuries, before it may be possible to say, plainly and without reserve, *Now he is here!*

CHAPTER II.

FRIEDRICH DANIEL ERNST SCHLEIERMACHER.[1]

In the pious home of his parents and in the community of the Brethren in whose institutions he received his education, Schleiermacher had from the first made acquaintance with religion not as a mere doctrine, but as an *element of life*, by the influence of which all the other parts of life were penetrated and directed. On that element his own young life was nourished, and in it he breathed, even before he became acquainted with the external objects, the experience and the attainments which were to occupy his mind. This he himself tells us: but nature had implanted in him not only deep feelings, but also and to an equal degree, the faculty and the impulse of reasoned thinking, and if the latter tendency received little satisfaction in the Herrnhutist seminaries, it asserted itself the more vehemently in opposition to the traditions of the belief of his father. With the desire for truth and the love of freedom which distinguished him all his life, he preferred a tragic breach with his strictly orthodox father and with his teachers to the misery of being untrue to his convictions.

But the Leibniz-Wolffian Illumination which was then predominant could not keep him permanently any more than orthodoxy. He was led beyond the half truths and the trivialities of this way of thinking first by the critical movement of Kant, the true tendency of which his congenial mind understood much more thoroughly than most of the Kantian rationalists. It was the fashion of the latter

[1] Dilthey, *Schleiermacher's Leben*, Berlin, 1868 (vol i.). Bender, *Schleiermacher's Theologie*, 1876. Haym, *Die romantische Schule*, chap. iii. p. 391 sqq. Lipsius, *Schleiermacher's Reden über die Religion*. Jahrb. für prot. Theol. 1875, Nos. 1 and 2.

to lay stress on the deistic postulates of Kant's faith of reason, and to erect on these a new dogmatism; but Schleiermacher saw in these elements of the Kantian system a survival of the old metaphysics (p. 193), and instead of using it in this way, advanced from it with Fichte to the notion of practical idealism, of the autonomy and autarky of the moral spirit, which looks for its happiness not to what is outside it or above it, but within, forming itself according to the law of its own being to a harmonious work of art, a microcosm, which finds in the outer world the object it reflects, as the outer world finds in it its copy. The *Monologues* (1800) are the poetico-rhetorical echo of Fichte's *Doctrine of the Sciences*, the triumphal song of the Ego feeling itself absolute.

Yet subjective idealism could not content his naturally healthy mind, and least of all as it appeared in the undisciplined extravagance of the Romanticists, though Schleiermacher was connected with them by close ties of friendship (with Fr. Schlegel). The religious disposition which he had carried with him from his parents' roof, and kept unimpaired throughout all his studies in philosophy, was itself enough to guard him from that danger. And in these studies themselves a counter-influence was found to that "one-sided narrowness of the empty consciousness" of critical idealism, namely, in the higher realism which Plato and still more, Spinoza, taught him. The combination of the doctrine of the oneness of the all with the transcendental philosophy, each of these positions correcting the other, became for Schleiermacher a bridge to a new religious view of the world, as Schelling found in it at the same time the transition to a new speculative view. But though these two men were so near to each other in thus turning at the same time to Spinoza, we must not forget that what led Schleiermacher, as what led Goethe, to the mystical pantheism of Spinoza from the abstractions of the critical method, was less a speculative than a practical religious need. Spinoza's contemplation of all finite existences under the form of eternity and unity, and his willing surrender to the orderly regularity of the universe, brings him freedom from passion and error, and the blessedness of intellectual love of God.

Schleiermacher himself indicates clearly enough that his view of the world is derived from this quarter, when he says in the first of his *Discourses on Religion to the Cultivated among its Contemners:* "What can come of the highest effort of speculation in our days, complete and rounded idealism, if it does not betake itself to this unity again; if the humility of religion does not teach its pride to think of another realism than that over which it so boldly and so justly declares its superiority? It will destroy the universe, which it appears to wish to form, and degrade it to a mere allegory, a vain shadow of the limited and one-sided notion of its own empty consciousness! Join me in reverently offering a tribute to the manes of the holy and rejected Spinoza! Him the lofty world-spirit penetrated, the Infinite was his beginning and end, the universe his only and infinite love. In holy innocence and deep humility, he reflected himself in the eternal world and saw how he in turn was its chosen mirror. Full of religion was he, and full of the Holy Spirit, and therefore he stands alone and unapproached, a master in his art, but exalted above the profane herd of those who practise it, without disciples, and without citizenship." This enthusiastic hymn involuntarily betrays the fact that the Spinoza whom the orator invokes is not quite identical with the historical philosopher of the absolute substance, who knew nothing, and could know nothing of the eternal world thus looking into the mirror of the individual, and the individual into the mirror of the eternal world, because the individual like the particular in general was to him merely the transitory, the unessential, over-against the universal substance. The Spinozism of Schleiermacher was therefore the same *modified and spiritualised Spinozism* which we have encountered in Lessing, Herder, and Goethe, only that it was not corrected and supplemented as in their case by the Leibnizian monadology, but, and to even a greater degree, by the Kant-Fichtean Idealism.

These manifold elements,—Herrnhutist piety, Leibnizian illumination, Kantian criticism, Fichtean idealism, Schelling's philosophy of identity, Spinoza's pantheism, and Plato's dialectics—all entered into Schleiermacher's thought. Nor did he merely connect them exter-

nally in an arbitrary eclecticism; his mind was no less actively reproductive than receptive on every side, and these elements were fused into a whole which was new, and bore the stamp of originality. The power which fused them was not so much that of speculative thought developing itself from one principle, as that of a peculiar moral and religious way of feeling, and a peculiar æsthetic mode of view. We spoke above (p. 260) of the general tendency of Romanticism, the movement which took up and continued the genial movement of the eighteenth century; it consisted, we saw, in protesting in every sphere of life against reasoned reflection and enlightenment and in an assertion of the right and the value of what is immediate, feeling and fancy, impression and presentiment. This tendency Schleiermacher, the theologian among the Romanticists, applied to the sphere of religion. By doing so he opened up the rich fountain of *mysticism*, which, though it never quite dried up in the churches of the Reformation, yet had never been properly valued and used for the scientific knowledge of religion; and in it he displayed to theology, then growing old, the means of renewing her youth. The Wolffian Illumination had reduced religion to a set of reasonable thoughts about God and the world; Kant had reduced it to moral maxims and postulates; every one had scored out and banished from religion feeling and imagination. In such circumstances Schleiermacher turns the matter right about, and proposes, with an equal exaggeration, to know nothing as religion but feelings and impressions. The former thinkers had expelled from religion everything special, individual, and positive, and had sought to impart uniformity to it and make it an empty and featureless abstraction of sound human reason or of the categorical imperative. According to Schleiermacher, on the contrary, the truly religious is a matter of immediate experience, and to be actual must be a specific and positive thing. He was so one-sided in this direction in his earlier period, and laid so much stress on this individual character of religion, as to be in danger of losing sight of what is common to all and objectively valid. Yet open as these exaggerations are to fair criticism, they in no way prevent the full recognition of Schleier-

macher's work, as having ushered in a new era in theology and the philosophy of religion: indeed, we may allow that they were necessary for the decisive result which the first considerable work Schleiermacher laid before the public, at once effected, namely, his *Discourses on Religion, addressed to the Cultivated among her Contemners.*

In these discourses Schleiermacher takes up his position before his irreligious age, as the champion of the peculiar and irreplaceable value of religion. He declares, however, at the outset, that what he has undertaken to defend and to exalt is quite a different thing from what her ordinary apologists take religion to be. His purpose is not to justify nor to assail any particular views, but to lead to the profound depths from which every form of religion springs, to show from what faculties of human nature it arises, and how it belongs to that which is most exalted and noblest in men's eyes. Contempt of religion proceeds mostly from the confusion of it with the systems and doctrines of theology, which are not religion at all. "Why," he exclaims to his readers, "do you not fix your eyes on the religious life itself? on these pious elevations of the mind, in particular, in which all other activities are repressed or almost suspended, and the whole soul fused in an immediate feeling of the infinite and eternal, and of her union with it? For it is at such moments that the disposition you say that you contemn originally and visibly manifests itself. Only he who has observed man and truly known him in such movements, is capable of finding religion again in those external manifestations, and he will see in them something different from what you see. For there is some of this spiritual substance bound up in all of them, without which they could not have arisen; but he who does not know how to disengage it may analyse them as he likes, and search through them as carefully as he likes, but will never find anything but a cold dead mass in his hands." What he is to defend is, accordingly, not the result, not the outer manifestations of religion in doctrines and systems, but religion itself in its original state, as an immediate sense of communion with the Infinite and Eternal. Nor is the method of defence to be that which was usually employed

(in the eighteenth century), which seeks to prove the necessity of religion from its usefulness to the civil community, to law and to morality. Schleiermacher rejects with scorn this utilitarian method of argument; a legal arrangement, he says, or a morality, which stood in need of such support, must be a wrong arrangement, a false morality; and religion too would be degraded if she were made the ancillary means to a foreign end. "A high praise for the heavenly one, if she could look after the earthly affairs of men in this poor fashion! great honour for her, free as she is and without care, to quicken men's consciences a little, and make them more careful! For such ends as these she will not come down to you from heaven! What is loved and valued only for an advantage that lies outside it, may be needed but is not essentially necessary, and a reasonable man will attach to it no higher value than the price of the end for which it is desired. And this would give but a poor price for religion; I, at least, would not bid high. For I confess I do not believe much importance is to be attributed to the wrong acts it prevents in this way, or to the moral acts it is said to procure. A fictitious credit which disappears when closely looked into, cannot help her who puts forth higher claims. That piety springs up necessarily and spontaneously from the inward parts of every better soul, that she has in the heart a province of her own in which she bears unobstructed sway, that she is worthy to vivify by her own inner power the noblest and most excellent, and to be welcomed and acknowledged by them, for her own inner nature's sake; this is what I maintain."

What then is religion when thus regarded in her immediateness and in her own character alone? This question receives its answer in the second discourse. It shows that religion is neither metaphysics nor morals, nor a mixture of the two, though in the positive religions these are always found mixed up with her. Religion is not a knowing; for the measure of knowledge is not the measure of piety. Contemplation is certainly characteristic of religion, but hers is a different contemplation from that of science; it is not her object to know the finite in relation to other finites, nor the essential

nature of the supreme cause, and its relation to finite causes; it desires to contemplate the universe, reverently to watch it in the representations and acts which are characteristic of it, and to let itself be seized and filled in childlike passivity by its immediate influences. It is the immediate consciousness of the universal being of all that is finite in the infinite, of all that is temporal in the eternal. "Thus to see and find in all that lives and moves, in all becoming and change, in all action and suffering, thus to have and know life itself only in immediate feeling as this being, this is religion." Nor is religion a doctrine of morals any more than it is metaphysics; the good man need know nothing of the reflected system of moral action in order to act morally; the example of women shows that it is possible to be moral without knowing any doctrine of morals. But neither does piety consist in action; for action depends on the consciousness of freedom, and moves only in the sphere of freedom: but piety has *also* (according to Schleiermacher indeed, *only*) a passive side: it appears as a self-surrender, a leaving self to be moved by the whole, and thus manifests itself in the sphere of necessity as well as in that of freedom. But though religion is not itself knowledge nor action, it is connected with both, and is essential to the perfection of each of them. "To profess to have speculation and practice without religion is reckless arrogance." What is the nature of this connection, we shall see afterwards.

To know positively the nature of religion we must watch it at the moments of its genesis within ourselves. It arises at the moment of contact, antecedent to all definite consciousness of the matter, of the active universe with our sense, the moment of interfluence and unification of sense and object, before either has retired again to its own place, the object, separated from the sense, become a *view*, and the sense, torn from the object, become a *feeling*. This fleeting moment "is the first coming together of the universal life with a particular life, it occupies no time, and forms nothing that can be grasped, it is the immediate wedded union, sacred beyond all mistake and misunderstanding, of the universe with the incarnate reason, for a creative generative embrace. Of such a nature is the first conception of

every living and original moment in your life, to whatever sphere it may belong, and from such a conception religious excitement also springs." As soon as the view or the feeling has proceeded out of it, there remains, if we are not to be condemned permanently to the division and to lose the true consciousness of life, nothing but the memory of that moment of the original union of the now sundered elements. "Your feeling, in so far as it expresses the common existence of you and the all, in so far as you have the several moments of it as the operation of God in you, mediated by the operation of the world upon you, this is your piety: your sensations and the operations upon you connected with them and conditioning them, of all that lives and moves around you, these and no others are the elements of religion, but these all belong to it; there is no emotion that is not religious, unless it be one that indicates a diseased condition of life." This paradoxical statement seems to be subject to a limitation; in the first edition, feeling appears as a constituent element of religion not in itself but only when taken along with the contemplation of the universe by the operation of which it is set up. A view without feeling is nothing, and can neither have the right origin nor the right power: feeling without a view is also nothing; both the one and the other are something only when, only because, they are originally one and undivided; in so far, that is, as they not only have their origin, from their very nature, in those moments of original unity—this is true of all of them,—but as they are still bound up with the consciousness of this their common origin. To set together religion, on the contrary, out of the elements in a state of decomposition, views and formulas on the one hand, feelings on the other, is an impossibility; it must proceed from within. Though we are entitled to assume that what the orator had in view, both at first and afterwards, was a certain connection of view and feeling, yet there is certainly a material difference. At the later period (in the 3d edition) the chief emphasis is laid on *feeling*, the corresponding view only being added as an accessory, while the language of the earlier period was this: "The whole must begin in a *viewing*; and he who has no desire to view the infinite, has no touchstone to tell

him if he has thought anything to the point. Viewing the universe, I pray you familiarise yourselves with this idea; it is the pivot of my whole discourse: it is the universal and highest formula of religion from which we may find out with the greatest accuracy her nature and her limits." We shall have occasion to return to this difference between the earlier and the later position, and to point out the importance of it; in the meantime we have only to state the fact.

The true object of religious contemplation is accordingly the universe. But where is this to be beheld? Immediately nowhere, mediately everywhere, in the *life of nature and of man.* In nature the divine unity and the unchangeableness of the world are revealed not in material objects, not in beautiful forms or colours, but in laws. Even what appear to be anomalies only point to the higher connection which everywhere seeks to express itself in individual forms. As the outer world only becomes intelligible by the inner, so the latter only by self-contemplation in the mirror of humanity as a whole. While moral contemplation isolates the individual, and comparing him with the standard of the ideal, rejects him, religion sees in every part of this field also the characteristic life and wondrous harmony of the whole. Looking into himself again from this point of view, the religious man finds here also the lineaments both of the highest and the lowest, a compendium of humanity. And even where sight fails us, beyond nature and man, religious presentiment can penetrate to further forms of the universe. With these contemplations there are united the religious feelings of humility, love, gratitude, compassion, penitence; for none of these feelings aim at action; they come in their own power, and are complete in themselves as functions of the inmost and the highest life. As the possessor of this treasure, religion is not a servant, but the indispensable friend and fully authenticated advocate, of morality in mankind.

After having thus described the inner and original essence of religion, Schleiermacher takes up the question, whether and in what sense religion is a system? It is a system inasmuch as the religious feelings have an inner connection with each other, and

there is a community of the distinctive modes of feeling, so that feelings which occur among Christians are not possible in the same way among Turks or Jews. It is not a system, if by a system we understand a body of propositions interdependent on each other. What is common in any particular religion is not a principle but a distinctive stamp of feeling, which occurs in every single element, and may be best compared to the distinctive styles and tendencies of taste in music, where whatever is individual is yet a perfectly unconstrained expression of the mental affection of the moment. All deduction, proof, arrangement of the particular under the universal, either belongs to a sphere completely foreign to religion or is a pure play of fancy. If then everything in religion is equally immediate, then everything, Schleiermacher argues, is equally true; for how else could it have come into existence? It is, therefore, and in so far, true, because and in as far as it grew up in feeling alone and has not yet passed through the notion. The difference between "true" and "false" is quite beside the point as applied to religion; every religion is true in its own kind, but each one must remember that the whole sphere of religion is an infinite one and capable of assuming the most diverse forms. Religion is never intolerant, only the systems of religion; it is love of system that rejects what is foreign to the system, while religion, on the contrary, abhors a bald uniformity, which would destroy her divine influence. It is only the adherents of the dead letter, which religion rejects, who have filled the world with the clamour and uproar of religious controversies; the true contemplators of the Eternal were ever quiet souls, either alone with themselves and the Eternal, or, if they looked about them, conceding willingly to every one the kind of religion he chose. To a pious spirit religion makes everything holy and dear, even what is unholy and vulgar, both what agrees with its thought and action and what disagrees with it: religion is simply the original and sworn enemy of all one-sidedness and small-mindedness. It cannot justly be held responsible for fanatical actions, because it does not of itself impel to action at all. Religious feeling should not and must not directly influence action; it rather invites to a quiet enjoyment in which self is forgotten, than

impels to outward activity. Our feelings and our acts form two parallel series: nothing should be done from religion but everything with religion: the religious feelings ought to accompany the life of action uninterruptedly like solemn music. As for the specifically religious acts, these are merely means for the treatment and the production of the religious feelings, which every religious man arranges according to his own requirement; to contend for certain forms of religious action as religious norms of universal validity belongs, like zeal for a system, rather to irreligion than to religion.

Religion then is neither a system of doctrines nor of acts; both of these are unessential accessories. How then are we to explain the dogmas and teachings which experience shows to be connected with religion? They, Schleiermacher says, are nothing but the result of the contemplation of feeling, of comparative reflection on it, and the means of expressing and communicating the particular feeling: for religion in itself they are not necessary, they are only produced by the reflection which comes to it afterwards. Thus with regard to the notions of miracle, inspiration, revelation, a man may have much religion without troubling himself about them: but he who enters on reflection and comparison with his religion finds them in his way, and cannot escape them. Thus they certainly belong to religion to a certain extent, and are not to be removed from it, however little we may be able to say as to the limits within which they ought to be employed. They do not conflict with metaphysics and morality, as they make no proposition as to the causal connection of things with each other, but are merely designations of the subjective state of mind of the religious man who finds in the finite a symbol of the infinite. Thus *miracle* is merely the religious term for "event;" every event, the most natural and the commonest, so soon as it assumes such an appearance that the religious view of it can become the principal view, is a miracle: the liveliest piety will therefore see miracles in everything, while to find miracles only in this and that curious event, betokens a want of religion as truly as the view of the world which finds miracle nowhere is an irreligious view. *Revelation* is every original and new communication of the

universe and the innermost life of the universe to man: every original mode of view or of feeling arises out of a revelation, which cannot, it is true, be pointed to and demonstrated as such, because it lies beyond consciousness, but which we must presuppose and of which we are well aware in the particular effects of it. *Inspiration* is the general expression for the feeling of true morality and freedom; for the state of being filled and determined by the higher spirit (the "genius"). *Prophecy* is any anticipatory forecasting of the other half of a religious event, the first being given. "He who sees no miracles in his own experience, in whose inner man revelations do not arise when his soul longs to drink in the beauty of the world, and to be penetrated by its spirit, he who does not at the most important moments feel himself driven by the divine spirit, so that he speaks and acts from a sacred inspiration of his own, he who at least is not conscious of his feelings as the immediate operations of the universe, while yet he knows some part of them his own, that cannot be imitated but guarantees its pure origination from his own deep inner man, he has no religion." But this too is the whole and the only true faith: what is commonly called faith, that attempt to think again and feel again what another has thought and felt before us, is a hard and unworthy service, to be laid down by every one who penetrates into the sanctuary of religion. It may be true that every man stands in need at first of a guide to direct and awaken his religious life, but in this case even more than in others this tutorship should be a merely temporary state of things. "You are right to think light of the poor repeaters of prayers who deduce their religion entirely from another, or connect it with a dead writing, which they swear by, and from which they prove everything. Every *holy Scripture* is in its nature a splendid production, an eloquent monument of the heroic time of religion; but by being slavishly worshipped it comes to be a mere mausoleum, a memento that a great spirit once was there, which now is there no longer: for if the spirit still lived and worked in it, it would rather look upon its former work with affection and with a feeling of equality, since the work can never be more than a feeble copy of itself. Not every one

has religion who believes in a holy Scripture, but he alone who understands it in a living and immediate way, and could hence for his part most easily dispense with it.

At the close of this discourse Schleiermacher shows that what he has stated about the religious notions generally is true of the notions of *God* and *immortality*, as well as the rest: they are not a presupposition and condition of piety, but the result of it, for they are only formed when piety itself is made an object of contemplation. In so far all that has been said applies to God, for the religious feeling spoken of above, in which the totality of the world is the stimulating agent and the totality of our nature the stimulated subject, is the immediate and original being of God in us. The common plan, on the contrary, of knowing about God by composing the notion of him out of various characteristics, neither answers to the scientific idea of God as the undivided unity from which all being is derived, nor to the way in which God is possessed in feeling. This ordinary notion of God moreover is involved in inner contradiction; it aims at being the highest, and yet conceives God so much in the likeness of men, that he is drawn down into the sphere of the finite. Schleiermacher distinguishes three stages of the consciousness of God: at the lowest God is sought in this or that finite object (fetichism), at the next he is sought partly in an inscrutable fate, a necessity which binds all things together, partly in a multiplicity of divine forms which are clearly distinguished from each other (polytheism). He stands at the highest stage who knows being as a unity in multiplicity, as both one and all. And whether we represent this one infinite being as personal or impersonal, is, in Schleiermacher's view, of subordinate importance: either view may be accompanied with a like intensity of religious feeling. Nor are the two views so far apart from each other as it appears to most people, "only that the one (the impersonal) view is not under the necessity of thinking death into its system, and of putting itself to all the trouble it costs to think away the limits from the other view (the personal one)." Which of those views a man adopts, Schleiermacher very subtly observes, depends chiefly on the tendency of his fancy: "if his fancy attaches

itself to the consciousness of freedom, so that it cannot bring itself to think that which it is to think as operative from the first in any form but that of a free being, then it will personify the spirit of the universe, and you will have a (personal) God; if his fancy attaches itself to the intellect, so that he always remembers distinctly that freedom has no meaning but in and for the individual, then you will have a world, and no (personal) God."[1] What Schleiermacher's own position was on this head is clear from all that we have seen of his views. His remark applies to himself, that the reason for rejecting the notion of the personal Deity may lie in a humble sense of the limitation of personal existence generally and specially of the consciousness which is tied to personality; and if this timidity and hesitation with regard to the notion of God as a person is what is meant by that pantheism which is so much abused, or by Spinozism or even Atheism, the pious man need not be disturbed at the proximity of atheism like this, as nothing appears to him irreligious but not to have the Deity immediately present in one's feeling: and whether a man inclines to this notion or that, the essential question is whether he has God in his feeling, and this divine element in his feeling must undoubtedly be better than his notion of it.

Even more remote from the true nature of religion than the ordinary idea of God is the ordinary view of immortality. True religion has immortality ever present in the devotion of the finite personality to the infinite whole. Those who demand an immortality of the future and care for no other, are in reality concerned for the preservation of their limited personality, which they wish to take with them beyond this life, only demanding keener vision and stronger limbs; they ask for a thing which is unthinkable, for who can succeed in the attempt to represent an existence in time as infinite? Instead of this they should rather seek to destroy their personality from love to God even here, to live in the one and all. "In the midst of the finite to be one with the infinite, and to be eternal at each moment; that is the immortality of religion!"

[1] Thus in the first edition, which, it appears to me, formulates the point of difference more clearly than the later statement.

Looking back from this point at Schleiermacher's notion of religion, we cannot but allow it to be an original attempt to comprehend the nature and the manifestations of religion scientifically from the point of view of idealism. Religion appears no longer as a phenomenon coming to man from without, whether by divine or human instruction, and necessary for the sake of outward ends (salvation in the world to come, earthly utility, support to morality, etc.), and thus more or less accidental to man himself, but is demonstrated as a fundamental fact of man's higher mental life, necessarily founded in his own nature and relation to the universe. Religion being thus made inward in the human mind, the old dogmatism (theological or metaphysical) was transcended, which never allowed the religious spirit to come to itself, because it was always dependent in one way or another on something outside it, something alien and uncomprehended, because it was always removed from itself and tied to that which stands without, the object. This external and unfree attitude now gave way to the *inwardness* of the own self: and the soul was recognised as the place from which the religious processes take their rise, and run their course. The activity of consciousness (reflection, Schleiermacher says) was seen to be the medium by which that inner product is broken up, reflected, projected to externality, in short translated into the language of religious notions. Thus the fundamental thought of all modern philosophy, which formed more or less consciously the tendency of the philosophy of religion from Lessing downwards, was for the first time carried out in a thorough manner in the field of religious science, thus laying a new foundation, inaugurating a new era, for this science. This is the immortal work of Schleiermacher, and the merit of it remains to him, even though we should confess that the first attempt to carry out this principle was inadequate and one-sided.

To assert for religion her own characteristic nature, and to exalt her native value, Schleiermacher would reserve for her a peculiar form of consciousness of her own. When it is asked, What form? his answer varies: at one time he says, view and feeling, at another feeling only. The first statement is freer from

the reproach of one-sidedness, but what it gains in this way it loses in unity, for view and feeling are two very different forms of consciousness, and the question inevitably arises, how the two together can form the one and undivided nature of religion. And this question is not solved by supposing both to be derived from an anterior moment at which sense and object were not separate but in each other; for this moment precedes actual consciousness, conscious religion is thus still outside of such a unity, and the question, how the oneness of religion may agree with the dualism of view and feeling, is still open. Again, the object of the religious view is said to be the "universe." But how is this possible? one would imagine that the object of any viewing must always be a limited object, open to vision, an outward or inner picture of definite forms, while the universe, the infinite, the whole of being, which excludes every limitation, is a thing which simply cannot be viewed but only thought, a notion, not a view. This impression is confirmed in the working out of the position, where Schleiermacher enumerates as the special objects of the religious view the laws of the life of nature and of man, the order and agreement of the whole in the multiplicity of the individual. But laws, and the orderly connection of the whole, these also are the object of thought, and by no means of immediate contemplation. And when we look about us in actual religion, whether in the lowest or the highest stages of it, in any part of it we please; this "view of the universe" is not immediately given in any religious idea. The religious idea always forms its object concretely in one way or another, and has to learn from thought that the Infinite is not a limited invisible object. We therefore recognise in this "contemplation of the universe" rather Spinoza's notion of "contemplative knowledge of God" than a definition which exactly covers religion as it really is; and when Schleiermacher seeks to persuade us that he is here describing the purely original and immediate nature of religion before and outside of all reflection and speculation, we shall be compelled to disbelieve him; the more that in the special instances he deals with afterwards he gives us as a pure description of

immediate feeling what is in fact a product, derived through a long process, of philosophical thought. From beginning to end of Schleiermacher's science of religion we encounter this peculiar transmutation, which we may explain both from his individuality and from the spirit of the Romanticist circle. It was ever the chief mark of romanticism to insist on immediateness and naturalness, while at the same time going to work in a purely reflective fashion, and often appearing unnatural enough.

At a later period Schleiermacher gave up insisting on this notion and abandoned it, placing religion in feeling alone. This gets rid of the difficulties we have mentioned, but at the cost of still greater one-sidedness. Feeling certainly forms an essential element in every actual religious consciousness, but religion is by no means feeling only, and by no means every feeling is religion. Schleiermacher asserted both these positions. By the former religion is shut off from the life of knowing and of will in a way equally opposed to sound psychology, which recognises no such divisions of the one human mind, and contrary to the experience of the religious life, in which a chief part is played by knowledge, not by single religious ideas merely, but by the religious theory as a whole, and by conduct, not by single acts merely, but by the whole practical attitude. Religious ideas are held by Schleiermacher to arise out of later reflection on the religious feelings, a reflection which is not necessary for the religious perception of the individual but only for communicating to others. This is true so far; the definite form of the religious ideas depends on mental conditions which arise elsewhere, apart from religion, and which may vary in cases in which the mode of feeling is the same: but on the other hand it is undoubtedly the fact, with regard to every complete act of religious consciousness, that the feeling only attains distinctness, even for the person experiencing it, by means of definite ideas, so that the latter are inseparable from the religious act itself, and do not arise from later reflection on it. The more original any religious consciousness is, the more foreign to it is this separation between feeling and idea, the more do the two coincide in one and the same moment. The same is true of the attitude

of the practical mind, the will, to religion. If the latter is nothing but feeling, then it is a pure passivity, a mere consciousness of being determined, not an activity of the mind itself; and in this case the moments of the religious and of the active life can only proceed as two parallel series, each by the side of the other: there is no interaction between them. But here also experience presents us with an altogether different picture. Healthy piety is distinguished (as Fichte quite correctly remarked) from sickly quietism, just by its becoming the impulse and the power of the moral life. But this can only be the case if it contains an active principle from the first; if the religious act is really an activity, and belongs therefore to the mind which wills.

Feeling is the most subjective element in man; in feeling, man is immediately related only to himself; he becomes aware of his state at the time, of his being stimulated or determined. Thus, in limiting religion to feeling, Schleiermacher makes it a purely subjective consciousness of the individual without any objective reference. Now, religion certainly is the most intimate concern of every subject, but it is, at the same time, the reference of each subject to the most universal object: and hence, as experience manifestly teaches, the religious consciousness everywhere takes for granted, and the more original and naïve it is, the more distinctly does it do this—the objectivity and universal validity of its contents. It is essential to it to regard that of which it testifies as possessing more than subjective truth. How does Schleiermacher's theory stand in this respect? According to him the difference between true and false does not apply to religion, everything in religion is equally true, as long as it is merely feeling, and has not passed through the obscuring process of reflection: nor is religion exclusive, it is only the love of system, which is foreign to religion, that leads to religious controversy. Here the one-sidedness of this whole mode of view becomes distinctly apparent. According to it the feelings of the rudest nature-religious, their fear of witchcraft, for instance, must be truly religious, because there is no thinking in them; and the religious feelings of a Schleiermacher, on the contrary,

which have passed through the thoughts of Plato, Spinoza, and Fichte, and been transformed in this crucible, must be far less true than those of savages. This exaltation of mere feeling as being the unadulterated truth, above thought which is held to be responsible for all untruth, is only to be explained from the prejudices of Romanticism, which cannot hold their ground when soberly examined. The truth of the matter is rather that thinking never, not even dogmatic thinking, introduces untruth into a religious consciousness which is essentially true, as little as the law introduces sin into a will essentially good. As the latter brings to the light the sinfulness which inhered in the natural will from the beginning, and in so doing, prepares for its being overcome, so does the thinking reason bring to light only what is untrue, impure and perverted in the original religious consciousness, fixing naïve ideas in notions, and so laying them bare to logical examination, and also preparing for their purification by true thought and by thinking of the truth. Dogmatic notions and propositions are not untrue because, or in so far as they are thought, but because, and so far as they are only *formally* thought, and have for their contents the still unrefined material of the naïve style of religious feeling and view. And in dogmatic controversies, it is certainly not the interests of thought, the school, the system, that lend vigour to the fray. How are we to account for the very different appearance that religious controversies present in history from those of the philosophical schools? The reason must be, that in the latter the differences at stake are differences of thought, of system merely, which can be adjusted in the way of cool ratiocination, while in the former it is the pathos of the heart that speaks the decisive word, and which, little accessible to cold logic, has recourse to more drastic arguments than those of thought. The more, on the other hand, thought, science, philosophy, relegate to its proper limits the pathos of religious feeling, and purify and enlighten it inwardly, the more do religious controversies tend to subside when they arise, and the more does that spirit of wide-hearted and unprejudiced toleration diffuse itself, which is quite strange, nay quite incomprehensible to the naïve religious consciousness, which

always regards its own subjective feelings as the objective truth, as true for all.

And the matter has another side. If feeling as such is to be regarded as truth, and thought as such as untruth, where can we look for a criterion to decide when a conflict of the feelings arises, each of them declaring itself to be religious, to be alone truly religious? If there is no such criterion, then no one can be hindered from drawing the conclusion that the conflicting feelings, since truth can only be one, are all equally untrue, equally illusory. And the feeling-theory, setting up the principle that all religious feelings are equally true, must almost necessarily fall into this fatal scepticism. But Schleiermacher goes still further, and asserts that not only are all religious feelings true, but that all true feelings are religious. This clearly contradicts his original intention to assign to religion its own definite sphere, and mark it off distinctly from the rest of life; and makes religion the vaguest, most indefinite, and undefinable thing in the world; for more fleeting and more changeful than the shadows cast by the clouds of spring are the manifold feelings that flit across the surface of the soul!

It may be said in Schleiermacher's defence, that this one-sided view is chargeable only to the bold paradoxes of the *Discourses*, and that his later theory of religion is free from it. But a glance at his *Dialectic* suffices to show how firmly he held, up to the end of his life, the identification we have described of feeling and religion. In fact, he seeks to establish it by a deduction of feeling, which, however acute, is yet at more than one point halting. Feeling, he here argues, is the unity of our being in the play between knowledge and will.

There must be between the predominant activity of the one, and the predominant passivity of the other, a point of transition and balance at which the antithesis of the different functions results in indifference. This indifference or identity of the Ego in the interchange of the different functions is immediate self-consciousness or feeling. The same indifference of opposites which exists in us subjectively as feeling, is objectively, in the universe, God. This

objective unity cannot be given as a unity either in our thought or in our will, each of these being already engaged in the opposition. God, therefore, is found immediately and originally only in our feeling, as the unity, free from antitheses, of our being; in fact, feeling, as this subjective indifference of opposites, is nothing but God, as he is posited in our consciousness, namely, as a constituent element of our self-consciousness. Thus, Schleiermacher concludes, feeling is immediately as such, abstracting from any particular contents of it, simply as this formal unity of our being, the being of God in us, the only being of God in us, and therefore religion. It is scarcely necessary to point out the mistakes in this deduction. Feeling is a psychological state of consciousness, and only one of the many forms of the life of the Ego, and it is obviously a mistake to identify it with the oneness of the Ego, which underlies all the forms of its appearance alike, but is absorbed in none, can be identified with none. It is a still bolder step to take the objective unity of our being for the being of God in and for our consciousness; feeling is made the subjective unity of our being, not only in point of form, but is said, at the same time, to embrace as its contents the absolute unity of the world, or of God in himself; this is in it from the first, given with and in its form. But the truth is, that feeling is a mere psychological form of consciousness, and so little essentially divine or the being of God in us, that it is, on the contrary, quite indifferent with regard to its contents, and can have for its contents what is lowest and meanest, just as well as what is highest.

This theory about feeling is found even in the *System of Doctrine* (*Glaubenslehre*) of Schleiermacher, though it must be acknowledged that in this work he defines the religious feeling more carefully, and thus seeks to correct the one-sidedness of the underlying view. The religious sentiment is here defined as that of "absolute dependence," to distinguish it from all the feelings we have with reference to the world, in which a dependence which is only relative is said to be combined with relative freedom. When we seek for light as to the source and cause of this feeling of absolute dependence, we are led beyond the sphere of divided existence or of the world, and thus there arises

before us the consciousness of God, which forms, when combined with the finite contents of our world-consciousness, our "higher self-consciousness." According as it is easy or difficult to combine the consciousness of God or the feeling of absolute dependence with any particular instance of our consciousness of the world, there arises the pleasure or pain (salvation or the want of it) of our religious life. This definition of religious feeling is intimately connected with the view that religion consists in feeling only; for feeling is simply a passive state, a becoming aware of being determined in one way or another: and thus here also it is just this form of feeling, as we found before, which, regarded in itself and made the contents of the religious consciousness, gives us absolute passivity or dependence. But the very fact that the religious man has a consciousness of his dependence takes him beyond mere passivity, beyond one-sided dependence, since even his knowledge of such dependence is an activity of his own. And in addition to this there also belongs to the religious consciousness, as was remarked above, some degree of will, some free self-determination. And what this aims at is simply to be made quite free from the obstructing limit and dependence which our freedom encounters in the world. Thus the religious consciousness admits of being termed the consciousness of "absolute freedom in God," which certainly does not exclude but rather includes the consciousness of "absolute dependence," and yet psychologically regarded decidedly takes precedence of the latter, since the first object of the religious man is to get rid of the pressing sense of dependence on the world, and he finds in this *liberation* his religious salvation.

It is accordingly impossible not to regard Schleiermacher's limitation of religion to feeling as a mistake. This however does not prevent us from acknowledging that the error consisted merely in the exaggeration of a truth, and was the more pardonable in its author, as it was naturally his first care to open the way for this important truth which in his day was generally ignored. That truth is, that religion does not consist either in doctrines or in ceremonies, but in *life*, personal life, in which it is true that feeling forms not

only an essential but even a central element, round which thought and will both revolve; and that therefore views and stirrings of the will, necessarily as they belong to religion regarded as a whole, yet only possess real religious importance in so far as there are personal feelings in correspondence with them, as they find in the heart their echo or their source; and finally that the value of religious feelings and dispositions does not depend on the literal truth of the corresponding religious ideas and theories, but can be of noble form and of high value even when the theories accompanying them are very defective. This last fact, a matter of the most ordinary experience, might lead us to think that religious and moral feelings have nothing to do with theoretical truth, but were quite independent of it, and rested on a basis of their own. Yet this would be to overlook the fact that what lends the religious and also the moral feelings (for these are precisely analogous to the former) their value is not the *form* of feeling but the content of what is felt, the purity and rightness of the motives which move the soul. And this purity and rightness again can only be measured according to the objective reasonableness or truth which dwells in the originating views in whatever form of consciousness they declare themselves. It is true that no truth of the reason, so long as it is merely known, as it dwells only in the head and not in the heart too, can make man moral or religious; that can only be done by what dwells in his heart as a living feeling, an abiding disposition; but on the other side it is equally true that the value of what a man has in his heart does not depend on the mere fact of his feeling it, nor yet on the subjective value it has for the person feeling it, according as it appears to him pleasant or satisfactory, but simply and solely on the consideration of its being the objectively true and good, and what is in itself reasonable, that the heart has taken up into itself and made the contents of its own life. Here we may also remark that the genuine Protestant notion of saving faith embraces both these elements alike, the objective truth of the contents (which however does not depend on its literal form) and the subjective living appropriation of them in the heart; but while orthodoxy has laid stress in an abstract

way on the former and made a doctrinal belief the main concern, pietism placed the subjective element of personal experience before the objective element of the truth of the contents, and thus followed the tendency which is logically worked out in Schleiermacher's religion of feeling, in which the subjective side receives too exclusive attention, and the objective contents are quite neglected. We may remark in conclusion on this part of the subject, that this purely formal feeling of Schleiermacher, devoid as it is of contents, forms the religious counterpart of the purely formal moral law of Kant, which is equally devoid of contents. We have the same abstract subjective idealism in both cases; the objective contents which are wanting being meagrely supplied in Kant's system by the moral postulates, and in the case of Schleiermacher by the indefinite indication of the origin of the feeling of dependence.

As for Schleiermacher's *notion of God* (or rather the theory representing it, for he declines to have any "notion" of God), we have already seen that the *Discourses* contain a modified Spinozism. The expression "the Universe," "the Infinite," "the world-spirit," and "God," are used as having the same significance, or where a distinction is drawn, as in several passages of the first edition, "God" indicates one particular view of the universe, that, namely, under the form of freedom, of personality; he represents then the "genius of humanity" or even of a higher super-human race, but this name stands always in connection with a particular race, and does not indicate the really infinite. Hence our author even says, "God is not everything in religion, but one thing, and the universe is more." It is granted at a later point that it is "an almost unalterable necessity" for piety to assume a God in this sense of the free personal ideal. The reason of this necessity however lies in the psychological need of *fancy* to personify the world-spirit; so that the intellect is left with the theory above described. In the later editions it is plainly said that the ordinary notion of God as a personal being who thinks and wills draws him down into the sphere of antithesis. To see the world as a whole and a unity is to see it "in God"; but to set up the Deity again as a separate special object is merely a mode

of representation which, though it may be indispensable to many and welcome to all, is still questionable and fruitful of difficulties from which the language of the people will never disentangle itself. To treat this representation of God as an object, as a department of knowledge, and so to develop as a science the being of God before the world and outside the world though for the world, this is mere mythology.

This point of view is essentially maintained in Schleiermacher's later period. In the *Dialectic* and *Dogmatic* he lays more emphasis on the distinction of God from the world, but not in the sense of attributing to God a separate existence of his own outside of and before the world: God and the world are not really separated, but only notionally distinguished as "two ways of meeting the same claim," God the unity and the world the multiplicity of being, hence no world without God, but on the other hand no God without a world. And this existence of both together is to be thought as a "going up into each other," for if there were anything in God that projected beyond the world, there would be something in him that did not condition the world, and if there were anything in the world projecting beyond God, it would not be conditioned by God. A dictum in the *Dogmatic* answers to this, in which Schleiermacher says that the divine omnipotence coincides in point of quantity with the totality of the powers of nature (finite causality), and is only distinct from them in point of quality, as the unity of the infinite causality differs from the multiplicity of its dispartite, finite phenomena. Nor does there reside in God a superfluity of power to create other things and more things beyond what he actually does create, what declares itself as real in the world; and thus an interference by God in the particulars of the course of nature, *i.e.* a miracle, is not possible. So far Schleiermacher agrees completely and in part even verbally with Spinoza. Yet he avoids designating God with Spinoza as the substance or as *natura naturans*. What he understands under the idea of God is rather after the analogy of Schelling's philosophy of identity, namely the absolute unity which must be assumed as antecedent to the antithesis of thought and being, the ideal and the

real, and as the transcendental basis which makes this antithesis possible. Now as our actual knowledge moves in this antithesis of subject and object, the unity in which antithesis is not can never be matter of knowledge to us: it is rather the principle of the possibility of all knowledge, and the *terminus a quo* for knowledge to start from, while the idea of the world is the *terminus ad quem*, or the principle of the reality of our knowledge[1]: the former is the form of all knowledge in its essence, but the idea of the world is the joining together of knowledge. The former is the "resting principle, relatively indifferent to the contents of real knowledge and to its advance, blessedness in knowledge essentially, the other is the activity of knowledge advancing, always directed to the whole, and regarding each particular as a mere point of transition to something beyond it." In other words: the idea of God is abstract unity, which we must conceive as underlying, but which is always merely the "resting"—*i.e.* remaining in its indeterminateness, and therefore closed to knowledge and dark,—"ground." It is therefore the *mere empty* form of knowledge, which is indifferent as compared with the real contents of knowledge, the actual world. If this be so, it is hard to see how this empty form, this unity without determinations, could be the origin of the fulness and manifoldness of the actual world; we do not recognise in it the *efficient* cause which brings itself to appearance, to existence, to manifestation and knowledge in the actual: still less the final cause which sets forth its unity in the multiplicity of phenomena to manifest itself in them as the concrete spirit, as creative reason and goodness. Accordingly the "blessedness" which is meant to be expressed in this idea of God is merely the removal of the antitheses which is attained by abstraction from reality, *i.e.* simply their negation, not the reconciliation of them which is attained by elevating them to their unity in the purpose they serve; it is the salvation of the lifeless void, not that of living harmony. Such an abstract absolute cannot be further determined in notions, we learn, it can properly have no further predicate beyond itself; and this is very intelligible, for it follows of itself without

[1] *Dialectic*, p. 164, *sqq.*

any further proof from the notion set up at the outset. But Schleiermacher also seeks to show in detail by critical instances, that the absolute being which speculation must presuppose as the transcendental unity, does not admit of being adequately thought in any notion.[1] If we should seek to think the transcendent under the form of the Highest Power (according to the last in the series of the notions), we either get the notion God (answering to our ideal function, lying, *i.e.* on the side of the ideal), and then to explain the world we must place matter beside him, which would condition him and make him finite; or we get the (more real) notion of *natura naturans*, the creative nature power. But this also, Schleiermacher holds, since power is no otherwise than in the totality of its phenomena (*natura naturata*), would be conditioned by the latter. (This position is evidently false, and rests on a substitution for logical relativity, and the mutual necessity to each other of the notions force and phenomenon, of real dependence of force on phenomenon). Or should we seek to think the transcendent under the form of the highest causality (the last in the series of judgments), we should get, as Schleiermacher goes on to argue, either the notion of absolute necessity, *i.e.* fate, or that of absolute freedom, *i.e.* providence. But neither of these answers the requirements of the case, for they relate not to be a being but to a happening, and they stand under the antithesis of unconscious and conscious. Thus—Schleiermacher concludes—the Highest is not really contained in any of the four notions, though God and providence are certainly the best of the four formulae. And even these two do not agree together. Thus the transcendent unity is not to be grasped by thought at all. It is only for feeling, as we heard above, and only given in feeling.

This whole argumentation is very characteristic of the manner and style of Schleiermacher's thought; it exhibits his careful enumeration of the various possibilities, his cautious critical estimate of each of them, according to their relative value. It has however undeniable weaknesses, or rather it reveals to us the principal defects of Schleiermacher's thought, the absence of a thinking which

[1] *Dialectic*, p. 416 *sqq.*

embraces the antitheses in a positive synthesis and develops them organically out of their unity in the concrete; in fact, his want of speculative power. Were this not so, we could not explain what there was to prevent him from taking up the various modes of view into which he analyses the notion of the Absolute, and connecting them together in the synthesis of speculative thought, so as to think together in a unity being and working, free activity and that which is under necessity. Schleiermacher's analysis did not prove that such a synthesis is impossible, it is impossible to prove this: on the contrary, such a synthesis is a requirement alike of consistent thought which aims at reconciling opposites, and of the practical religious consciousness, which does not presuppose an abstract unity of the religious object, but a unity that is determined in various moments. That Schleiermacher did not recognise this is due to his defective notion of religion, with his one-sided theory of feeling. It is here that we find the true reason of his refusal to seek the knowledge of God in thought; and it is natural enough that he should be led to this point. In fact, to say that religion is identical with feeling is the same as to say that God, the object of religion, is only for feeling and not for thought. The one position is bound up with the other, and stands or falls along with it. Hence it is not correct to say that Schleiermacher's rejection of the knowledge of God amounts to the same thing as the criticism of Kant. The two positions certainly approach each other nearly, but both in their starting-points and their results they differ greatly. "Schleiermacher appears to do no more than carry the Kantian criticism of rational theology some steps further forward on its own road; yet on looking more closely we soon perceive in the background of his criticism a point of view far separated from that of Kant. The latter denies the knowableness of God, because our knowledge is limited to phenomena, and our reason has no means of forming a notion of the supersensible. Schleiermacher denies it because any notions of the Deity that we can frame fail to answer to the true idea of God, the idea of the absolute being. The former keeps in his criticism inside human consciousness; he is content to affirm that among the notions we can form, that of the

Deity is not found; he is not guilty of the inconsistency of denying to us the possibility of the knowledge of God, and at the same time presupposing a definite view of the Deity. Schleiermacher commits this inconsistency: he compares the highest notions we can form with the notion of the Deity, and finds that they do not attain to it. Then he must possess this notion; he must know how we are to conceive of the Deity, in order to think of it aright: his criticism has for its foundation a perfectly definite dogmatic conviction." (Zeller.)

This dogmatic basis is for the most part Spinozism, not in its earliest form indeed but in the modified form in which it experienced its resurrection towards the end of the 18th century. This has been clearly shown to be the case by Strauss, in his masterly sketch of Schleiermacher.[1] "The reader's thought, even though it has endeavoured at the first reading of the work (Schleiermacher's *System of Doctrine*) to follow the writer on his winding road, which he gives out is that of theology, will yet on going back and remembering the journey scarcely avoid the temptation to strike into the straight path, which is also infinitely shorter, through the field of philosophy. The author has put up many a notice forbidding this, but these notices are not likely to be heeded, the less so as there are strong reasons for suspecting that the writer himself attained the point to which he would have us take the longest road, by himself taking the shorter one. For though we should allow, which we certainly cannot, that it is possible to reach the consciousness of the dependence of all finite existence on the divine causality by the way of feeling only; yet on the other hand the proposition which is also advanced by Schleiermacher that the divine causality arrives at complete manifestation in the totality of finite existence, betrays too clearly its speculative origin. For pious feeling is certainly content with finding as it rises upwards from any given finite, every such finite dependent on God: to descend from him again to find the fulness of the divine being completely set forth in the totality of the finite is a matter that concerns speculation" (and not immediate feeling, which would naturally rather think that in God there is an

[1] *Charakteristiken und Kritiken*, p. 166 *sqq.*

infinite superabundance beyond what actually exists). . . . The main propositions of the first part of the System of Doctrine of Schleiermacher only become intelligible when translated back into the formulas of Spinoza, from which they originally emanated. The relation of God to the world, on which the whole is built, and according to which the two regarded as magnitudes are equal to each other, only that the former is the absolute and undivided, and the latter the dispartite and divided, unity, can only be explained from the relation of *natura naturans* and *natura naturata* in Spinoza." In the same way the union in God of freedom and necessity, of his willing the world and willing himself, of will and thought, of the actual and the possible in God: the determinist doctrine of freedom and the negativity of evil in the doctrine of man: all these find their immediate parallel, and it may well be their source, in the speculation of Spinoza.

For all this however Schleiermacher had a good right to remonstrate against being called simply a Spinozist. He differs widely from Spinoza, and rather approaches Leibniz in the stress he lays on individuality, in which he sees an independent and self-authenticated incarnation of creative reason. The relation of reason and nature, too, which he states as the foundation of his physics, *i.e.* psychology, and his ethics, differs widely from the relation of the two attributes of thought and extension in Spinoza, and has almost more affinity with Leibniz's kingdom of grace (ends) and of nature (causes), or again with Kant's reason and sense. And as Schleiermacher is far removed from the blind a-teleological determinism of Spinoza, he takes a great deal of trouble, according to the maxims he has set up, "to think away death from the divine nature," and to replace the abstract unbending substance of Spinoza by the living causality of God. In this he was not quite successful; his notion of God failed to lift him decidedly above the abstractness of Spinoza's substance to concrete spirit; at this point he betrays a want of speculative power. But those are least entitled to make this a reproach to Schleiermacher, who have never seriously considered the difficulties of the notion of a personal God and of the dualistic relation of God and

the world, and have found it easier to go on quietly without putting themselves about, in the traditional ruts of the ecclesiastical trinitarian, or of the rationalistic deistic notion of God. If Schleiermacher's critical thought could not so easily shake off the difficulties and contradictions of popular anthropomorphism; if he could not prevail on himself to think of the absolute cause as a separate being beside other beings and outside of the world: if he found the supernatural miraculous interferences of such a being with the world irreconcilable with the scientific notion of a regular world-order; if from all these reasons he attempted, and brilliantly succeeded in the attempt, to base a system of Christian doctrine on the spiritual facts of the religious self-consciousness, disregarding altogether the whole apparatus of supernaturalism, we must at least count this as great an achievement as his deepening of the psychological notion of religion (p. 316), and an incomparable, and never-to-be-forgotten service rendered by him to the service of religion, a service which is not to be the less thought of for the defects which must be acknowledged in details of his system. These defects indeed are in this instance also nothing but the exaggerations of a truth which had still to clear its way to acceptance. For this same reason the correction of these defects will never be furnished from the point of view of those who simply ignore the abiding truth of Schleiermacher's theology, and boast of the progress they are making when they are simply falling back into the trivialities of the Illumination and of the *Rationalismus vulgaris.*

It still remains for us to glance at Schleiermacher's view of the *positive religions.* He speaks of them in the fifth Discourse, the third having treated of the "preparation for religion," and the fourth of "Church and Priesthood." Religion being an infinite thing exists only in a multiplicity of individual phenomena, that is to say, in the positive religions, not in an empty abstraction, such as the so-called "natural religion" might be. The preference felt for the latter in the present age is due to the fact that those who dislike religion generally have most favour for that which is not properly religion at all, and exhibits in the least degree its characteristic features. The so-

called natural religion is generally so polished, and has such metaphysical and moral manners that little of the peculiar character of religion can be seen in it, it practises such reserve, and limits and accommodates itself so well that it is easily tolerated everywhere. Every positive religion on the contrary has a distinctly marked individuality. It is not an extract from the total sum of religious views and feelings, for all of these occur in one way or another in every actual religion: rather does every individual religion proceed from some special view of the universe being made central, and everything else placed in relation to it. Now as this is a thing that every one can do for himself, there would properly be as many individual religions as there are religious individuals. And Schleiermacher says that there is a peculiar and genuine religion in every one who can state the birth-hour of his religion and trace it to a direct influence of the Deity (a "revelation"). Here all is life and freedom and a true and native development, while on the contrary in natural religion everything is abstract; its strength lies in the denial of what is positive and characteristic, that is of what is actual: it is like a soul which did not wish to come into the world because it desired to be not a particular man but man in general. This view of Schleiermacher's is undoubtedly justified as against the abstract religion of reason, which levels down all individual traits to barren uniformity, or the natural religion of the Rationalists. But here again he seems to deal with an extreme view by setting up the other extreme against it. Against indefinite universality he places the equally undefinable, because infinitely varying, multiplicity of individual phenomena which are mere atoms, and in isolation quite fortuitous. Of true life and natural development there is equally little reason to speak where there is unity without multiplicity, and where there is mere multiplicity without any organising unity; if in the former case there is no motion, in the latter there is an aimless play of motion. It has been rightly observed that where subjective taste and the attractive power of individuals thus predominate, the life of the religious community cannot rise above the condition of the sand, which winds and waves arrange in new groups every successive moment.

And Schleiermacher himself found it necesary at a later period to put some limit to this extreme subjectivism. A new revelation, we are told in the later editions, is never formed of elements that are trifling or merely personal; there is always something greater and more widespread in such a formation. As in the civil, so also in the religious sphere, it is mere sickly aberration that shuts a man out from the common life with those among whom nature has placed him, in such a way that he belongs to no greater whole; what any man finds to be the central point of religion, he will find represented somewhere on a large scale, or else he will so represent it himself. "As no man can arrive at actual existence as a separate being, without being placed at the same time, by the same act, in a world, a definite order of things and a particular set of circumstances, so neither can a religious man come to his own life, without by the same act living himself into a common life, that is to say, some definite form or another of religion."

In his "System of Doctrine" Schleiermacher adds to the distinguishing *fundamental view*, the central and ruling idea which is the inner mark of a definite religion, the outer mark of the *fundamental fact*, the definite historical beginning. These two, the fundamental idea and the fundamental fact, answer to each other and are inwardly, causally, connected together. The original fact of the foundation of the community forms of itself the central point, to which the consciousness of God attaches itself so pre-eminently that the process of union of the consciousness of God with the other contents of consciousness can only take place with reference to that fact and by means of it. In so far as this original fact impresses on all the manifestations of religion in the community their specific character, the latter are all positive; so that in every specific form of religion everything is positive; *i.e.* individually determined by the historical fact of the original formation of the community. In virtue of its originality that event which lies at the root of a historical religion is called "revelation;" a notion which excludes both communication and tradition from without and invention by reflection, and which denotes divine communication, which however is not to be under-

stood as an act of teaching man as a knowing being, but as the peculiar and extraordinary effect which a personal appearance makes on our consciousness by the impression it creates as a whole, doctrine not being excluded from this impression but included in it as one of its features. There is a close affinity between the phenomena which we regard as religious revelation and the higher levels of heroic and poetic inspiration; in fact the only difference, according to Schleiermacher, is that in the case of religious revelation it is not a single moment that is determined by the divine communication but a whole existence. Divine revelation of this kind Schleiermacher finds to have been present in those personalities of heathenism in which the divine was typically shown forth in a human life, in an original way not explained by the historical connection. Only the revelation of God in the whole of the world is absolutely original, and as all individual phenomena, however original when considered in themselves, may yet be understood from the general condition of the society they belong to, the notion of revelation can only be applied to individuals in a relative sense, and the claim of any religion to absolute revelation in the sense of the communication of truth whole and unalloyed is an impossible one. This proposition follows correctly enough from Schleiermacher's philosophical presuppositions; yet in his dogmatic Christology he keeps but a loose hold of it.

The historical religions Schleiermacher classifies partly according to stages of development, partly according to their generic peculiarities. The stages of development: Fetichism, Polytheism, Monotheism, rest on the combination or distinction of God-consciousness and world-consciousness. Schleiermacher remarks however that this gradation according to notions does not necessarily coincide with the historical process of development; the latter may be conceived either as a rise from fetichism to polytheism and monotheism or as a double development starting from a childlike undefined monotheism and partly descending to idolatry, partly ascending to a pure belief in God. He also remarks here that "pantheism" is not to be thought of as a separate form of religion, that it is rather a specula-

tive theory, which is very compatible with piety if only it be not a disguised materialism. Even in the usual formula "one and all" God and the world may still "continue separate, at least as regards function;" and thus the pious man, while adopting that formula, may yet view himself as part of the world and feel himself dependent, with this all, on that which is the one to it. (After what we have learned from the *Discourses* and the *Dialectic* we do not require to remark that this is exactly Schleiermacher's own case.) Such states, he adds in conclusion, may be hard to distinguish from the pious feelings of many a monotheist. Beside this distinction of the religions according to their stages Schleiermacher sets up the following distinctions of them according to their kinds: In the pious feelings of the religion either the natural states are subordinated to the moral (the passive to the active) or *vice versa*, the active (moral) to the passive (natural); in the former case the religion is teleological in its form, in the latter æsthetic. Among the æsthetic religions, Schleiermacher counts the religion of Greece and Islam; among the teleological Judaism and Christianity.

The fundamental idea of Judaism is in Schleiermacher's veiw (in the Fifth Discourse) that of recompence, a childish idea, which could only flourish in the narrow space of a strictly limited national community, and the value of which for Christianity he always rated very low: "I hate historical derivations of that kind in religion; each religion has its own eternal necessity, and every beginning of a religion is original." This audacious and questionable statement may have been to some extent due to a reaction against that pedantic ingenuity with which rationalists and supernaturalists alike labour to explain Christianity from Judaism whether by supernatural or natural derivation. The fundamental idea of Christianity is stated, in the Fifth Discourse, to be that the ruin of the finite in its alienation from God is removed, and the finite reconciled to God by certain points dispersed over it which combine finite and infinite, human and divine. "Ruin and redemption, enmity and reconciliation, are in this mode of feeling inseparably bound up with each other, and form the fundamental relations to which every part of the religion has

reference, and by which its form is determined." The belief in undivine beings, who are everywhere present, gives to Christianity its polemical character; but it also recognises the divine government in history, and believes that new arrangements are constantly being set on foot to bring the ruin to an end, and higher and higher revelations and mediators given between God and man, so that in each successive messenger there is a more intimate union of the two. Thus Christianity makes religion (the history of religion) itself the matter of religion, and is as it were a higher power of it: this is the most distinctive mark of its character. Of the founder of Christianity he then goes on to say that what is most remarkable in his appearance is not so much his pure moral doctrine, which only expressed what all men who have arrived at spiritual consciousness feel along with him, nor yet the idiosyncrasy of his character with its intimate union of lofty power and the most touching meekness; "all these are but human things; what is truly divine in him is the splendid clearness with which the idea he had come to represent shaped itself in his soul: the idea that all that is finite needs the help of something higher, to be connected with the Deity, and that for the man who is entangled in the finite and particular, salvation is only to be sought in redemption. . . . This consciousness of the uniqueness of his knowledge of God and being in God, of the originality of the mode in which it was in him, and its power to com municate itself and stir up religion, this was the consciousness at once of his mediatorship and his divinity. . . . But he never claimed to be the only Mediator, the only individual in whom his idea had realised itself; all who were attached to him and formed his church were to be this in him and through him. And he never confounded his school with his religion, as if his idea was to be accepted for the sake merely of his person; his person on the contrary was to be accepted for the sake of the idea; indeed he was very willing that nothing should be said of his position as Mediator if only the spirit, the principle out of which his religion grew in himself and in others was not blasphemed. . . . Nor did Christ ever claim that the religious views and feelings which he himself was able to communi-

cate were the whole of the religion which was to proceed from the fundamental feeling. He always pointed to the living truth that should come after him, though only taking of his. And the same of his disciples. They never set limits to the Holy Spirit; the unlimited freedom of the spirit and the unity of his revelation throughout, they always recognised. . . . The holy Scriptures became the Bible by their own power: but they forbid no other book to be or become Bible too, and anything written with the same power they would gladly admit at their side." Christianity will last for ever in so far as there will never be a time when no mediators will be needed: yet it will not be the sole, monarchical form of religion: it despises this narrowing monarchy; it would gladly see other and younger, and if possible more vigorous and more beautiful forms of religion arise beside it from every quarter: "and a forward-looking soul, its eyes turning to creative genius, might perhaps even now name the point which must be central for future generations for their intercourse with the Deity."

Schleiermacher was always true to this belief, indicated in such broad terms, in the power of religion to develop itself and to grow more perfect. And at a later period he still refused to limit Christianity to a definite historical form. At this later period however he conceived that all progress was a development *within* Christianity, not beyond it, and we notice that while in the *Discourses* the person of Christ was only one among an infinite number of actual and possible mediators, it later became with him that of the *one* mediator, the perfect type of religious goodness, whose complete God-consciousness was the one original place of the being of God in man, and the infinitely active power of redemption and atonement for the race. This turn of his thought first appears in his *Christmas* (1806), where he places in the mouth of one of the speakers essentially the same view as he afterwards set forth more at large in his *System of Doctrine*. "The life and joy of original nature, where the antitheses between appearance and reality, time and eternity, do not appear at all, is not ours. And if we imagined this (original life) in any being, then we thought of this being as a Redeemer, and his

beginning must be for us that of a divine child. We ourselves on the contrary begin with the discord, and only reach atonement through redemption, which is nothing but the removal of these controversies, and therefore can only proceed from him for whom they did not require to be removed. The historical traces of his life may be ever so inadequate, but the Christmas festival does not depend on them; it depends, on the one side, on the necessity of a Redeemer, and on the other on the experience of a higher life which can be traced to no other source than this." . . . "The community by which man is represented or restored to himself is the church. He who is regarded as the starting-point of the church must have been born essentially man, the God-man. For we are born again through the spirit of the church, but the spirit itself only proceeds from the Son, and he needs no second birth, but is born originally of God: he is simply the son of Man."

Here we have what we cannot but regard as a true advance: instead of the unbounded individualism of the former period, in which all historical objectivity was drowned in a chaos of all manner of fortuitous subjective experiences, Christianity is here recognised as a unique religious principle of world-historical importance, and this principle is brought into the closest connection with the characteristic personality of the founder. But Schleiermacher identifies this personality so entirely with the ideal principle, that it is exalted to an absolute ideal and indeed to a miraculous appearance; and in this he becomes chargeable with exactly what he speaks of in the *Discourses* as an "immense misunderstanding," and very subtly explains from the character of the religious consciousness; namely, with confounding the fundamental fact from which a religion proceeds, with the fundamental view of the religion itself, a confusion which he says has led almost all men astray and distorted the appearance of almost all religions. "Never forget, then," he continues, "that the fundamental view of a religion can be nothing but some view of the infinite in the finite, some general religious relation which there is nothing to hinder from appearing in any other religion, and which must appear in each of

them before it can be complete, only that in other religions it will not occupy the central position." In other words, the principle of a religion must consist only in a certain direction of the God-consciousness, that is in a fact of consciousness, within the mind. It never can consist in outward facts of history, however important these may be to produce the religion or to help it on its way. This is clearly the only position consistent with a theory which finds the essence of religion not in acquiescence in certain traditions of history or dogma, but in the immediate life of the heart in God. To this extent it cannot be denied that there is a certain hiatus between Schleiermacher's philosophy of history and his theological system of doctrine. The idealism of the former has in the latter taken a positive turn; a turn which we can not only explain but can even justify when we consider the object of the latter work, which aimed at assisting the positive aims of the church.

END OF VOL. I.

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